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South Africa: Organized Black Labor

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A Research Paper

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Guide to Labor Organization Acronyms

AFCWU	African Food and Canning Workers' Union
BAWU	Black Allied Workers' Union
CCAWUSA	Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union
CUSA	Council of Unions of South Africa
FCWU	Food and Canning Workers' Union
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
GAWU	General and Allied Workers' Union
GWU	General Workers' Union
GWUSA	General Workers' Union of South Africa
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
MACWUSA	Motor Assemblers' and Component Workers' Union of South Africa
MAWU	Metal and Allied Workers' Union
MWASA	Media Workers' Association of South Africa
MWU	Mine Workers' Union
NAAWU	National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
SAAWU	South African Allied Workers' Union
SACL	South African Confederation of Labor
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
TUCSA	Trade Union Council of South Africa

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South Africa: Organized Black Labor

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A Research Paper

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This paper was prepared by Office of African and Latin American Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations.

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Africa Division, ALA, on

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South Africa: Organized Black Labor

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Key Judgments

Information available as of 15 July 1983 was used in this report.

The rapid unionization in recent years of South Africa's black workers—who make up about 70 percent of the country's total work force—has given the black labor movement increased potential to effect changes in the apartheid system. Since the government's decision in 1979 to give black unions official recognition and allow their participation in collective bargaining, independent black unions have doubled in number, and black membership in unions has grown from 90,000 to about 500,000. Although this represents only about 6.5 percent of the black labor force, there is still tremendous scope for membership growth, especially among South Africa's 500,000 black miners, who have only recently begun to be organized. Increased rates of economic growth—likely by mid-1984—probably will accelerate the growth of union membership.

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In our judgment, however, organized black labor faces major obstacles before it can become a significant political actor on the South African scene. Questions of union organization, cooperation with the government, economic and political goals, and tactics have been divisive and are continuing barriers to unity within the black labor movement. Moreover, because of the vulnerability of black workers to the business cycle, even relatively strong unions will have difficulty maintaining both organizational momentum and worker commitment through successes on the bread-and-butter issues such as job security that become increasingly important to workers during economic downswings. Poorly organized unions that have failed to win tangible gains for their members probably will not survive recessions.

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Perhaps the greatest obstacle to unions acquiring a major political role is government itself. The labor reforms in 1979 were motivated, in our view, by the desire of government and business to end economic disruption caused by strikes and to create and co-opt a stable black middle class by giving it a "stake in the system." Pretoria has accommodated unions that confine their activities to workplace issues but has moved swiftly to punish—mainly through harassment and detention of leaders—those unions that engage in political activity, especially those it suspects of having ties to the outlawed African National Congress, the principal antigovernment insurgent group.

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Nevertheless, in the absence of other organized outlets for political expression, many unions will continue to act as a channel for blacks to express their discontent and to press for comprehensive reform. While some labor leaders will feel constrained by the state's powers of unlimited

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detention and banning, others will almost certainly continue to test the line between tolerable and excessive involvement in nonworkplace issues. For its part, Pretoria is almost certain to crush unions it perceives as too politically militant or those whose actions threaten serious disruption to key economic sectors such as mining or transport. 25X1

Concern about a growing white backlash probably will prevent Pretoria from pursuing additional labor reforms any time soon. Important segments of organized white labor—including white miners—have remained adamantly opposed to labor liberalization for blacks. Whites have been susceptible to blandishments from the political right and have become part of a conservative political opposition that has made Pretoria more cautious about reform 25X1

Although the steadily growing importance of black workers to the economy offers them their greatest opportunity to exert pressure over time for changing apartheid, we believe that unionized blacks may come increasingly to represent a black labor elite—one whose interests are likely to conflict with those of the mass of unemployed and unemployable rural blacks. As spokesmen for urban labor, black union leaders could acquire a more significant economic and political role, but may find it difficult to reconcile the interests of their members with those of the wider black community at the national level. This is the aim of Pretoria's policies, which are designed to create and co-opt a stable black middle class as a buffer against revolution. Should organized black labor find ways to speak for black workers as a whole and thus negate Pretoria's efforts—something we consider unlikely in the near term—South Africa could be faced with unprecedented industrial unrest and economic disruption spearheaded by unions acting in support of black demands for political rights. 25X1

US firms will continue to be important targets of industrial action by black unions whose expectations of success have been heightened by the leadership these firms have already shown in pursuing enlightened employment practices and granting concessions to organized black labor. Some such firms are likely to join with unions to press for continued reform as they seek to deflect international criticism for their operations in South Africa and will increasingly look to Washington for guidance on the direction of US policy toward South Africa. At the same time, Pretoria is likely to resist outside involvement in its internal affairs, and existing links between South African unions and organized labor in the United States could become a source of bilateral tension. 25X1

Contents

	Page
Key Judgments	iii
Introduction	1
The Setting	1
Impact of the Reforms	5
Growth	5
Geographic and Industrial Base	5
Union Affiliation	6
Impediments to Black Labor Unity	8
Organizational Discord	8
Issues of Contention	9
Racial Organization	9
The Registration Debate	12
Economics Versus Politics	12
International Labor Connections	13
Union Performance	14
Democratic Unionism	14
Tactics	15
Recruiting	15
Industrial Action	15
Bargaining	18
Impact of Recession	20
Political Action	20
Unions and Liberation Groups	22
White Responses to Organized Black Labor	23
Government	23
Accommodation	23
Harassment	23
Employers	26
A Period of Adjustment	26
Accepting New Realities	26
Continuing Resistance	26
Constraints on Management	27
White Labor	27
Limited Support	28
Opposition	28
Conservative Political Backlash	28

25X1

Outlook		29
	Pretoria's Policies	29
	Near-Term Prospects	29
	The Longer Term	31
Implications for the United States		31

Appendixes

A.	Early Black Unionism: Lessons From History	33
B.	Government Harassment of Organized Black Labor, 1979-83	37
C.	Chronology: Significant Events for Black Labor Before Reform	41

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South Africa: Organized Black Labor

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Introduction

In the wake of labor reforms enacted by the South African Government in 1979, the size and number of black unions have multiplied rapidly. The organizational strength and power of black unions—though still fragile—has grown, and industrial unrest has increased dramatically. Although the recent spurt in growth is not the first for black unions in South Africa—there have been four prior episodes—it is the most sustained and potentially the most important. Many informed observers believe that organized black labor will be one of the most important sources of change in South Africa.

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This paper examines the political and historical development of the black labor movement; the dimensions and characteristics of its recent growth; the competing forces at work within the movement; and the reaction to the rise in black labor's power on the part of government, employers, and organized white labor.[1] The prospects of black labor as a force for peaceful change in South Africa and the implications for US interests also are examined. Appendixes provide details on the history of black labor organization, recent government harassment of black unions, and a chronology of significant labor events prior to the recent reforms.

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The Setting

Growth in the membership of black labor unions achieved significant momentum after 1979 as a result of the work of two government commissions that studied black manpower issues. The Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions each made a number of recommendations for liberalizing the treatment of black workers, many of which were subsequently adopted in government legislation. The new laws provided for the first time for legal recognition of black unions and for their inclusion in state mechanisms for collective bargaining and industrial conciliation. These changes marked the most fundamental reforms affecting black labor in more than 50 years.

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Black workers have always constituted the largest segment of the South African labor force—about 70 percent in 1982. Dependence on black labor has resulted in a virtually irreversible integration of the South African economy and, in the view of most observers of South Africa, has forced white South Africans to reassess some of the fundamental tenets of the apartheid system and its underlying theory of separate development. The creation of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions in 1979 reflected the depth of the white establishment's concern over economic and demographic pressures [2] that had been building for years and were at the root of the wave of strikes and resulting economic disruptions that occurred between 1973 and 1976. The pressures included:

- A black population that had reached nearly 20 million in 1979 and was increasing at an annual rate of about 2.7 percent.
- Increasing urbanization of blacks that was projected to grow from the current 40 percent to 60 percent by the end of the century in spite of apartheid measures designed to control the number of blacks living in urban areas.
- Concentration of industry in existing urban/industrial centers.

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, this paper is based on a variety of press and Embassy reporting, public statements by black labor leaders, and observations by South African academic observers of the labor scene.

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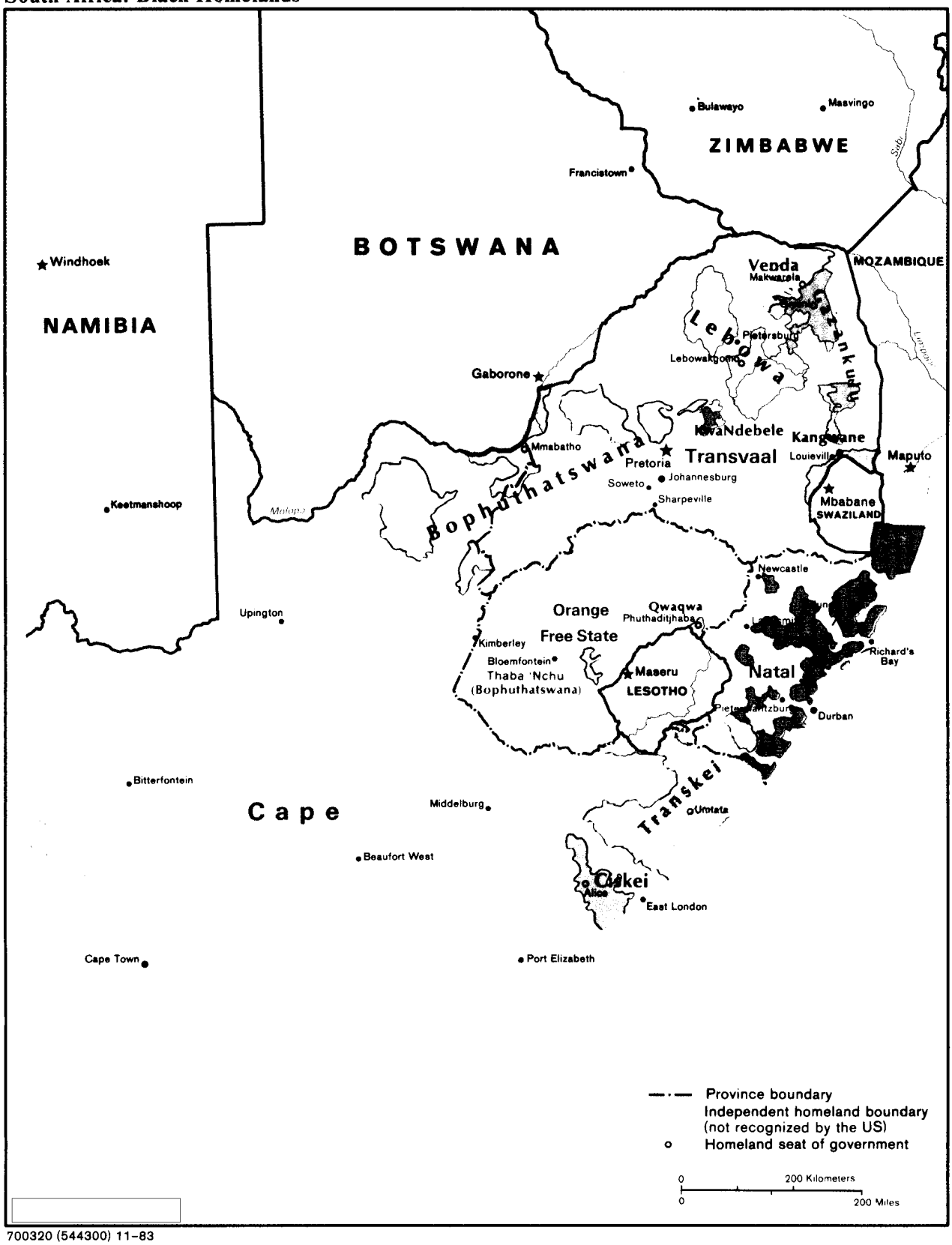
Figure 1
South Africa: Black Homelands



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The Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions: Birth of Labor Reform

Labor reforms have arisen from the proposals of two special commissions appointed in 1977 by the government:

The Commission of Inquiry Into Labor Legislation (Wiehahn Commission). *A 14-member body chaired by Professor Nic Wiehahn, it included six trade union representatives but no blacks and was mandated to report and make recommendations on all aspects of labor and industrial relations legislation. The creation of the commission was motivated in part by concern over skills shortages and a desire to expand the pool of skilled manpower, as well as by the urgency of finding effective ways to reduce industrial unrest among blacks.*

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The Commission of Inquiry Into Legislation Affecting the Utilization of Manpower (Riekert Commission). *A one-man commission consisting of Dr. Piet Riekert, it was mandated to consider questions of labor utilization not covered by labor and industrial relations legislation—especially in such areas as labor mobility and urban rights—in order to improve the efficiency of the labor market.*

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The overall task of both commissions was to find ways to improve mobility in the labor market, which necessarily meant tampering with restrictions at the heart of the apartheid system.

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The report of the Riekert Commission, published in 1979, made proposals that have resulted in the following changes:

- *Efforts to improve access to housing by urban blacks.*
- *Removal of some restrictions on black businesses.*
- *Provisions for the establishment of greater autonomy in local self-government for urban blacks.*

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The Wiehahn Commission issued six reports over a two-year period beginning in 1979. These reports dealt with union rights, training, welfare legislation, safety, industrial relations, and the mining industry. Legislation arising from these reports has provided for:

- *Trade union rights for black workers that for the first time included official recognition and registration of black trade unions.*
- *Participation by black unions in statutory machinery for collective bargaining.*
- *Greater access for black workers to apprenticeship training.*
- *Reduction in petty apartheid in the workplace.*
- *Prohibitions against political activity by trade unions.*
- *Greater financial and other controls over trade unions.*
- *Gradual abolition of statutory job reservation that had barred blacks from some skilled jobs.*
- *Deletion of all references to race in industrial relations legislation.*

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- Projected annual increases in the black labor force of roughly 250,000 to 300,000 over the next decade that would require average annual economic growth of about 6 percent or more to prevent higher unemployment.

- Chronic and growing shortages of skills that constrained growth in some sectors and aggravated inflation and whose remedy demanded giving blacks access to training and to skilled jobs.

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The commissions' findings acknowledged what businessmen and government economic planners had long recognized: that the requirements of apartheid were in large measure incompatible with the attainment of maximum economic growth under free enterprise, and that the cost in economic efficiency and growth sacrificed to sustain rigid apartheid was becoming prohibitive.

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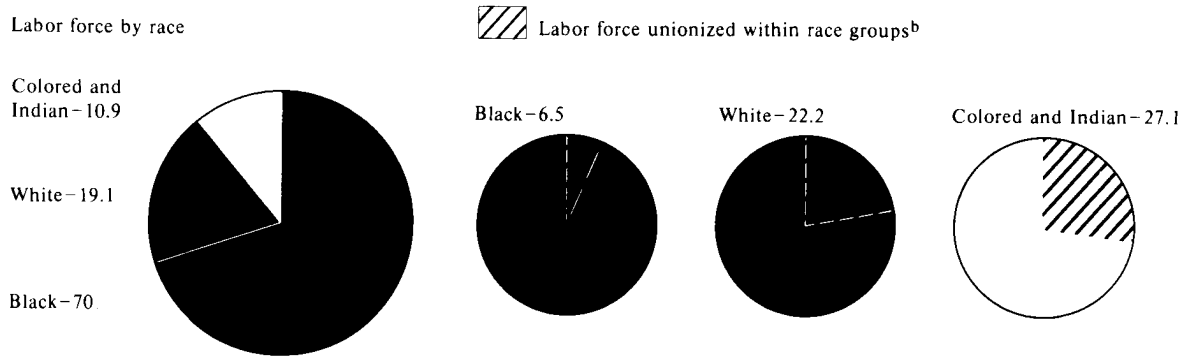
Figure 2
South African Labor Force:
Racial and Unionized Composition, 1982



[a] Estimated; including agricultural workers.
[b] Union membership by race; Black (500,000), White (466,200), Colored and Indian (325,500).

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Pretoria—pressed by businessmen, industrial managers, and even by some segments of white labor, for action in restoring labor peace and reducing costly economic disruptions—had little choice but to seek some form of accommodation with black labor. As Manpower Minister S. P. Botha admitted in late 1979, the policy of discouraging black unions through nonrecognition had failed.

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In our view and that of most observers, government strategy in initiating labor reform was to prevent wholesale radicalization of black labor by bringing all black unions under some form of organized control. Pretoria probably believed that it would be easier to control the leadership of an organized union than to confront the spontaneous demands of a disorganized mass of workers. Cautious concessions were, therefore, coupled with stricter controls. Indeed, the basic thrust of the Wiehahn reports was to establish control over black unions, while the Riekert report called for stricter enforcement of such basic elements of apartheid as restrictions on the geographic mobility of black workers—especially their migration to urban areas.

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Pretoria has long displayed a preference for co-optive solutions in dealing with black labor, and the attitudes that characterized government policy in the past were carried over in the new reforms (see appendix A). By recognizing black trade unions, Pretoria, in our view, hoped to focus union activity on specific causes of labor dissatisfaction and direct it toward economic rather than political demands, thereby defusing the most sensitive and unacceptable aspects of black union potential. Pretoria expected blacks to adopt peaceful negotiation in place of disruptive strikes and work stoppages as they learned the advantages of collective bargaining. Other reforms, meanwhile, were aimed at opening the way for greater training and advancement for black workers.

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Impact of the Reforms

Growth

On the eve of the new legislation there were only 26 independent black unions in South Africa, representing about 90,000 members. At least 17 of these unions had been founded during a brief spurt in black unionism from 1973 to 1976. All but one of the 26 were industry-based unions rather than "general workers" unions that recruit members from across industry lines. Only five were not affiliated to one of the labor federations then open to black unions. 25X1

Even before the publication of the first report of the Wiehahn Commission, existing black unions had grown more active in strikes and recruiting efforts in anticipation of favorable recommendations from the Commission. Numerous new black unions began to be formed, both independently and as an outgrowth of white and mixed-race (nonblack) unions which established "parallel" branches or, in some cases, "sister unions" for blacks in their industries.[3] The most significant growth, however, took place in the independent black unions—commonly known as emerging unions. 25X1

By early 1983, in our judgment, about 500,000 blacks probably could claim to be either paid-up or signed-up members of a trade union. About 80 percent of these unionized blacks belong to the 40 or so independent black unions.[4] One reason for rapid growth is that recruitment has generally become easier. Encouraged by the legal status of unions and well-known cases of union success in winning benefits, workers have, according to some union officials, become less fearful and have sometimes taken the initiative in applying for membership. 25X1

The disadvantages imposed by apartheid on most individual black workers also encourage union membership. A white worker can change his job if he is dissatisfied; a black without permanent urban rights is subject to arrest and deportation to a homeland if he quits. Consequently, most blacks probably are encouraged to belong to a strong union able to take up their grievances. 25X1

Despite rapid membership growth, only about 6.5 percent of the black work force is unionized, but the number of organized blacks probably now exceeds the total for whites. South Africa's union membership remains, nevertheless, low by international standards—less than 12 percent of the total work force. Only 22 percent of whites are now organized after a decline over the past decade. Coloreds and Indians have, at about 27 percent, the highest rate of unionization but constitute the smallest share of the total work force. 25X1

Geographic and Industrial Base

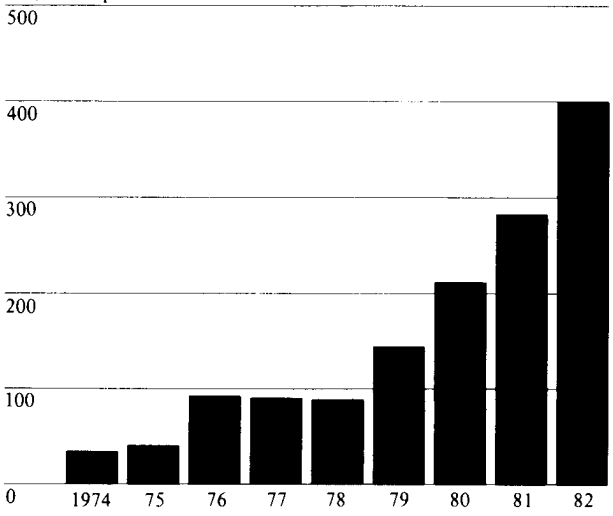
The growth in the membership of black unions has been geographically widespread, covering industrial areas in the Transvaal (particularly around Johannesburg), both eastern and western Cape Province, and in Natal. The greatest concentration of growth, however, has been in the areas around East London and Port Elizabeth in the eastern Cape. This reflects in part the successful recruitment of relatively skilled workers by older unions in the automobile assembly industry, which, along with the textile industry, has the greatest percentage of unionized black as well as white workers. 25X1

Unlike the older black unions, many of the newest and fastest growing unions have been established for "general workers" rather than for workers in a specific industry—an approach that offers a larger pool of workers for recruitment by union organizers. Craft

[3] Most observers do not consider "parallel unions," established by and dependent on existing nonblack unions for funds and leadership, to be independent unions. Nor are the "staff associations," set up for blacks by some employers in lieu of trade unions, considered to be independent. 25X1

[4] Large discrepancies between the number of paid-up and signed-up members and incomplete records and reporting by the independent black unions themselves make a precise membership count difficult to obtain. Paid-up members amount to no more than half the signed-up number in some unions. Of the total black union membership, probably about 40 percent belong to those independent unions that have not registered with the government and whose growth has often been most dramatic. In our view, support for unions among black workers probably is far wider than even signed-up membership indicates because of lingering fear on the part of many blacks of being openly associated with an independent union. 25X1

Figure 3
Membership in Independent Black Unions, 1974-82[a]



[a] Estimated. These data do not include the substantial number of workers who are (especially since 1978) signed-up but not paid-up members of unions. Were they included, we believe that membership by the end of 1982 would have been about 500,000.

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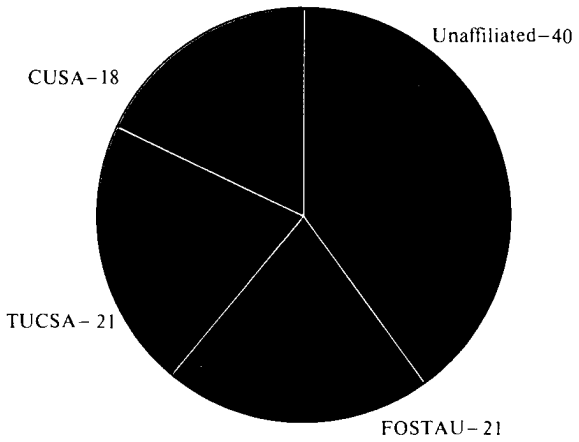
Figure 4
Affiliation of Black Union Membership, 1982



Key:
FOSATU: Federation of South African Trade Unions
TUCSA: Trade Union Council of South Africa
CUSA: Council of Unions of South Africa

[a] Estimated; including signed-up as well as paid-up members.

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unions—the mainstay of much white organized labor—have been largely irrelevant to most blacks, who are preponderantly unskilled workers with limited access to craft trades. Nearly a third of the nonwhite work force has no education, while another third is educated only to the primary level.

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Black organizing efforts—including those by general workers unions—have been successful among dockworkers and in the food and canning industry and are gathering momentum in the economically all-important mining sector. Last year, three unions—including two independent black unions—were allowed by the mining companies to organize and recruit among the nation's nearly 500,000 black miners, nearly all of whom are migrants. Earlier this year, the most successful of the three unions—which claimed 30,000 members—was recognized officially at eight gold mines, and in July it conducted successful wage negotiations that affected all black miners.

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Unions have also gained footholds in the Transvaal metalworking industries. Black unions have so far not made significant inroads into the construction industry, nor have they enjoyed success in organizing the public sector—including South Africa's giant parastatal corporations—where blacks make up only 50 percent of the work force because of the heavy representation of Afrikaners.

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Union Affiliation

On the broadest level, unions with black members can be divided into those that have affiliated with others in labor federations and those that have remained

Table 1
Labor Federations for Black Unions [a]

Characteristics	Year Founded	Leadership	Membership
Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA). Multiracial. The largest labor federation in South Africa, with 57 racially segregated affiliates found in nearly every industrial sector. Black members belong to parallel unions set up by many affiliates. Black membership is often involuntary as a result of closed shop agreements. Affiliates sympathetic to independent black unions have been at odds with rightwing affiliates and the increasingly conservative TUCSA leadership, and some have threatened to withdraw from the Council.[b]	1954	Arthur Grobbelaar (white), General Secretary. E. Van Tonder (white), President.	100,000 whites; 227,000 Coloreds and Indians; and 103,000 blacks.
Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). Multiracial with mostly black membership. Founded and still influenced by white labor activists and academics, it is the successor organization to a Trade Union Advisory Council (TUAC) that had been established in 1973 in Natal. Many affiliates predate the 1979 reforms. Three-fourths of members, and the most important of the 10 affiliates, are in the auto, textiles, and metalworking industries, nationwide. Most affiliates are registered and organized by industry. Strong central control, commitment to training of labor leaders, and heavy reliance on shop stewards at local level. Affiliates have been responsible for much of the industrial unrest since 1979, and have more than 200 recognition agreements. Focus has been on economic issues. Membership has doubled since 1980.	1979	Joe Foster (Colored), General Secretary. Chris Dlamini, President.	106,000, including some Coloreds.
Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA). Created by unions formerly belonging to TUAC but which broke away from those that founded FOSATU. Based in Transvaal. Most of its 11 affiliates are registered and organized by industry, and are found in the transport, auto, textiles, and mining industries. Has advocated black consciousness and a focus on economic issues. Younger members have been more activist and nonracial in attitude. Committed to training of union officials. Membership doubled from 1981 to 1982, led by a new affiliate for black miners. CUSA is an affiliate of the Western-oriented International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.	1980	Phiroshaw Camay (Indian), General Secretary. Albert Mosenthal, President.	89,000 blacks, perhaps half of whom are paid up.

[a] Some black unions were formerly affiliated to the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and still maintain contact with this nonracial federation which, though not illegal, went into self-imposed exile in the early 1960s after its leadership was harassed with arrests and bannings. Pretoria has been suspicious of unions it believes are linked to SACTU because SACTU acts as the labor arm of the outlawed South African Communist Party and the African National Congress. SACTU also is affiliated to the Communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions and is recognized by both the Organization of African Trade Union Unity and the International Labor Organization as the sole official representative body for South African workers.

[b] The only other significant cooperative body for white unions is the South African Confederation of Labor (SACL), an extremely conservative organization influenced strongly by the rightwing white Mine Workers' Union. In recent years, SACL's membership has declined dramatically—to about 125,000 now from more than 200,000 in 1979—as affiliates have defected to TUCSA because of disagreements over racial policy and labor reform.

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unaffiliated. There are three major trade union groups in South Africa whose affiliates have black members:

- *Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA).* Established and led by traditional white and mixed-race (nonblack) unions, TUCSA also includes the parallel unions they created for blacks. Most unionized Indians also belong to TUCSA affiliates.

- *Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU).* Formed in the post-Wiehahn period, FOSATU consists of independent and nominally multiracial unions—most of which were formed before 1979—that are predominantly black but include some Coloreds, especially among the leadership. Many of FOSATU's affiliates had belonged to earlier labor federations.

- *Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA).* Consisting of independent unions, CUSA—although nominally multiracial—is exclusively black in membership, with the exception of its general secretary who is an Indian. Several affiliates were formed before 1979, and CUSA was itself established following the defection in 1978 of several unions from FOSATU's predecessor because of a dispute over affiliate autonomy, which was favored by the founders of CUSA.

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Some of the most successful black unions have been those that have remained unaffiliated, although many of these have explored ways of developing broad-based labor unity in cooperation with CUSA and FOSATU.

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Impediments to Black Labor Unity

Organizational Discord

There are deeply rooted differences in both ideology and practice among black unions that have impeded efforts at unity. Pulling and hauling over whether unions should be racially exclusive or multiracial, over the pros and cons of registration with the government and participation in the state-sanctioned disputes machinery, and over goals and tactics have been particularly vigorous from the beginning of the Wiehahn-inspired resurgence in union activity.

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Disputes over such issues have been responsible for schisms within the labor movement, as unions have broken up and given rise to new ones. The proliferation in the number of black unions in recent years has in part been a result of this factionalism and fragmentation, according to most observers. The result has been a very fluid situation in which there are frequent changes in the affiliation and status of individual unions. For example, internal feuding in just one union, the Black Allied Workers' Union (BAWU, founded in 1974), led to the formation of three others (the South African Allied Workers' Union, SAAWU, in 1978, and the General and Allied Workers' Union, GAWU, and the National Federation of Workers in 1980).

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Most union leaders agree that labor unity is desirable but they are reluctant to give up their independence. In addition, splits within, and open rivalries among, unions and labor federations have left deep wounds and have reinforced personal animosities among labor leaders. Unions have, nevertheless, on occasion been able to demonstrate a facade of unity—the national work stoppage in 1982 to demonstrate solidarity after the death in detention of union official Neil Aggett is a case in point [5]—but attempts at formal and permanent unity have foundered so far at the national level.

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One of the major practical obstacles to meaningful unity has been resistance to the merging of unions where they have already been competing to organize the same industry. For example, both FOSATU and CUSA have unions in the auto, chemical, and textile industries. Interunion rivalry—which has been the cause of some industrial unrest—would be reduced and organizing efforts rationalized by union mergers arising from labor unification

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[5] Neil Aggett, a white trade union activist and Transvaal organizing secretary for the AFCWU, was detained in 1981 as part of a major crackdown on labor activists. He committed suicide while in police custody in February 1982 after more than two months in detention. A subsequent and celebrated lawsuit charging the South African Security Police with responsibility for Aggett's death because of its interrogation techniques drew unprecedented attention to such abuses, and, although the SASP were exonerated, the case has resulted in significantly less harsh handling of detainees.

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Most of the efforts toward greater unity among independent black unions have taken place in four "summit" meetings, according to Embassy and press reporting. The first summit, in 1981, resulted merely in pledges to resist government repression without specifying the form such resistance should take. A second meeting held in early 1982 was apparently a fiasco. CUSA refused to sit down with white-led unions, while MACWUSA and its sister union, the General Workers' Union of South Africa (GWUSA), walked out to protest the failure of other unions to reject registration. 25X1

Nevertheless, FOSATU, probably eager to stake a position for itself at the head of the black labor movement, used the occasion to call for a formal umbrella alliance—modeled after FOSATU itself—in which voting strength would be based on size and policy decisions would be binding on affiliates. Most rival unions, partly out of fear of domination by FOSATU, rejected such a centralized federation and argued for greater autonomy. 25X1

Further talks took place at a third meeting, held later in 1982. This time, representatives from CUSA, MACWUSA, and GWUSA attended, although the latter two again walked out in disagreement over registration and the role of whites in black unions. This meeting also failed to establish a working alliance, but the unregistered African Food and Canning Workers' Union (AFCWU), its sister union, the Colored Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU), and the GWU established a good working relationship with the FOSATU unions and agreed to continue talks. Moreover, these white-led unions have subsequently been at the forefront in pursuing broad-based black labor unity. 25X1

The fourth and most recent summit took place in early 1983 at the initiative of GWU and motivated by concern over growing competition among independent black unions. Seven of the 14 groups present—including FOSATU, AFCWU, GWU, and SAAWU—agreed to form a committee to study the feasibility of federation and to work out details 25X1

In an unusual display of solidarity, even those groups not currently in favor of joining—such as CUSA and MACWUSA—voiced support for the most recent effort and did not rule out future participation. The feasibility committee meeting held in early July 1983 was described as successful but few details were announced. Although it is too early to tell whether these developments mark a turning point in unity efforts, a further meeting is planned for later this year, and, according to Embassy reporting, the new federation could be formed by year's end and may include CUSA. 25X1

Issues of Contention

Racial Organization. The issue of whether unions should organize along racial lines is one of the most controversial and important questions dividing the labor movement. This reflects the longstanding differences that have existed among black political leaders over such questions as: Should the freedom struggle be multiracial or must blacks liberate themselves? Should "black" include Coloreds and Indians, or is it exclusivist? Is race or class the basis of the liberation struggle? 25X1

The unions that have joined together in CUSA, for example, although formed with nonracial constitutions, trace their ideological roots to the black consciousness movement of the 1960s and 1970s and have in practice been racially exclusivist.[6] Another group, characterized by FOSATU unions, considers itself multiracial and has many Colored members and some Colored leaders. TUCSA is also multiracial, but its affiliates typically are organized on the basis of racially segregated parallel branches, with conservative whites controlling the central leadership. Finally, several unaffiliated black unions—such as the GWU and AFCWU—are avowedly and in practice nonracial. They are led by whites who are strongly influenced by Marxist thought and who analyze South Africa's labor and social problems in terms of class rather than race. 25X1

[6] Black consciousness is a racially exclusive black nationalist ideology that views the liberation struggle as one of race rather than class. It is, therefore, hostile to white involvement in black organizations and institutions and to the nonracial approach espoused by leftist liberation groups such as the African National Congress. 25X1

Table 2
Prominent Independent Black Unions

Characteristics	Year Founded	Leadership	Membership
African Food and Canning Workers' Union (AFCWU). Unaffiliated. Unregistered. Based in Western Cape Province but has nearly 30 branches in food-processing industry nationwide. Nearly 70 recognition agreements. Advocates nonracial philosophy. Shares common leadership with a sister union, the Colored FCWU, which was a founding member of SACTU. Active in labor unity efforts.	Unknown	Jan Theron (white), General Secretary. J. Pendlani, President.	More than 20,000.
Black Allied Workers' Union (BAWU). Unaffiliated. Unregistered. A general workers' union based in Natal. Committed to black consciousness. Has had numerous defections over issue of nonracialism.	1974	B. Khumalo, General Secretary. M. J. Khumalo, President	Claims 80,000 signed up, but actual number may be as low as 5,000.
Black Mine Workers' Union (BMWU). Unaffiliated. Claims to have applied for registration. Received permission in 1982 to organize black miners. Characterized by most observers as a "one-man union" lacking popular appeal.	Unknown	Chillian Motha, General Secretary.	Unknown, but probably less than 1,000.
Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA). Unaffiliated. Registered. Based in Transvaal but has organized retail trade workers nationwide. Mostly female membership. A nonracial union but with close informal ties to CUSA. Active in strikes since 1981.	Unknown	Emma Mashinini, General Secretary. Isaac Padi, President.	25,000.
General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU). Unaffiliated. Unregistered. A general workers' union based in Johannesburg. Advocates nonracialism. Formed as a result of schism in BAWU. Target of police harassment.	1980	Samson Ndou, General Secretary.	Unknown, probably not more than a few hundred.
General Workers' Union (GWU), as the Western Province Workers' Advice Bureau. Unaffiliated. Unregistered. Organized primarily around dockworkers at Cape Town and eastern ports. Has about a dozen recognition agreements. Advocates nonracialism and democratic unionism. Active in labor unity efforts.	1973	David Lewis (white) General Secretary.	20,000.
General Workers' Union of South Africa (GWUSA). Unaffiliated. Unregistered. Based in Port Elizabeth and has some support in Pretoria area. Established as a sister union to MACWUSA for workers outside the auto industry.	1981	Unknown.	Unknown, but perhaps as much as several thousand.
Motor Assemblers' and Component Workers' Union (MACWUSA). Unaffiliated. Unregistered. Based among Port Elizabeth autoworkers, primarily at a Ford plant. Linked closely with a local black civic organization. An advocate of black consciousness. Engages in militant political rhetoric. Formed by a faction that broke away from NAAWU, it has refused to cooperate with other auto unions even on workplace issues.	1980	Government Zini, General Secretary. Dumile Makhanda, President.	2,500.
Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU). Largest FOSATU affiliate. Registered. Based in the Transvaal metalworking and engineering industries. Has obtained at least 10 recognition agreements.	1973	David Sebabi, General Secretary. Andrew Zulu, President.	Claims 45,000.
Media Workers' Association of South Africa (MWASA). Unaffiliated. Unregistered. Based in Johannesburg but also active in Cape Town and in Natal Province. Advocates black consciousness. Activist and articulate leadership has been frequent target of bannings and detentions. Rift developing as some younger members shift toward nonracialism.	Pre-1980	Goba Ndlovu, General Secretary. Charles Nqakula, President.	1,000.

Table 2 (continued)

Characteristics	Year Founded	Leadership	Membership
National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU). FOSATU affiliate. Registered. Created by merger of three racially segregated auto unions. Has significant Colored membership. Based in eastern Cape Province and Pretoria. Favors traditional, "bread-and-butter" unionism.	1980	Fred Sauls (Colored), General Secretary.	15,000.
National Federation of Workers (NFW). Unaffiliated. Unregistered. Based in Natal. Created as a result of a split from BAWU. Nonracial and community oriented. Most successful with port workers at Richard's Bay. Has launched at least three sister unions with little success. Has no recognition agreements. May have ties to SAAWU.	1980	Magwaza Maphala, General Secretary. Matthew Oliphant, National Organizer.	Unknown, but probably only a few hundred.
National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). A CUSA affiliate. Unregistered. Based in Transvaal gold mines but also attempting to organize coal miners. In June 1983, NUM became the first independent black union to be recognized by the gold mines and to conduct wage negotiations.	1982	Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary. James Motlatsi, President.	30,000.
South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU). Unaffiliated. Unregistered. Created as a result of a split from BAWU. Based in East London and in Natal Province. Some support in Transvaal. Advocates nonracialism, worker democracy, and community action. Hostile to government of Ciskei homeland. Leaders are frequently detained. Has obtained several recognition agreements.	1979	Sam Kikine, General Secretary. Thozamile Gqweta, President.	Claims 80,000. Actual number may be as low as 20,000.

25X1

These differences over racial policy have been the basis for much friction among the labor federations. TUCSA and CUSA have accused FOSATU of being dominated by the whites who founded it and are active in its administration. FOSATU has, in turn, publicly attacked TUCSA's parallel unions as being devices for ensuring white control of black labor. Relations between TUCSA and independent black unions deteriorated during 1982 as TUCSA appeared to drift further to the right. Black labor leaders were especially offended by and condemned harshly a TUCSA statement criticizing the work stoppage called by black unions in 1982 following Neil Aggett's death.

25X1

The vitality of organizations committed to a black consciousness approach appears to have waned in recent years. Although the ideology had never really permeated the ranks of ordinary workers, there is, nevertheless, a reluctance on the part of many blacks to operate either politically or within the labor movement alongside white activists and radicals:

- Just last year, the Textile Workers' Union (Transvaal) left white-led TUCSA to join black exclusivist CUSA because of resentment over white leadership.
- The unregistered and unaffiliated Black Municipal Workers' Union split last year, with one faction joining CUSA and the other remaining unaffiliated because of disagreement over racial exclusivity and political action.

- According to US Embassy reporting, the Media Workers' Association of South Africa (MWASA), has been threatened since last year with a split between the older adherents to the black consciousness philosophy, on which the union was founded, and the younger majority of the members, many of whom favor a nonracial approach to unionism as well as to political action. 25X1

The Registration Debate. Another issue that has sparked intense debate is whether to register with the government. Although virtually all black unions were initially opposed to registering because of the state controls that came with it—including government monitoring of internal union activities—the issue eventually precipitated a split among black unions. 25X1

Many unions, especially those from FOSATU and later from CUSA, have contended that registration is tactically useful in that it gives them leverage in dealing with employers and the government—especially since many employers refused initially to recognize and deal with unregistered unions. Other advantages to registration include access to official collective bargaining machinery and the right to use the checkoff system, whereby an employer automatically deducts union dues from workers' wages on behalf of the union. Thus, despite reservations on FOSATU's part about the requirement that unions organize and register on a racial basis, most of its affiliates and those of CUSA have registered. 25X1

Registered unions have been criticized bitterly by unaffiliated unions such as GWU, SAAWU, and AFCWU. These and other primarily unaffiliated unions have rejected registration because of the state controls involved and because the requirement that unions register on a racial basis violates their commitment to nonracialism in the labor movement. Still others, such as BAWU, MWASA, and Motor Assemblers' and Component Workers' Union of South Africa (MACWUSA), have rejected registration with the white authorities as incompatible with their militant black consciousness. 25X1

According to most observers of the South African labor scene, even the rejectionists are divided. Some unions do not object to registration per se but want it to be an unrestricted process of notification that would not involve acceptance of any restrictions or controls. Others reject registration in principle because they view it as an act of "collaboration" that helps the state perpetuate an unjust system. 25X1

Although there were some advantages initially to rejecting registration—such as freedom from controls on membership and finances—legislated controls were later extended to unregistered unions. As a result, differences among unions over whether to register have now become almost entirely a matter of principle, reflecting a union's attitude toward the state and the role of a black union in an apartheid system. In essence, refusal to register has become a deliberate political statement. AFCWU, SAAWU, and GWU, among others, have remained emphatic in their rejection of the registration concept. 25X1

Economics Versus Politics. Unions represent a potential vehicle for addressing black political as well as economic grievances. Many of them have already become rent by internal struggles among activists who emphasize one side of the issue or the other: that is, whether the labor movement should focus on traditional bread-and-butter issues or become political and community-action oriented. 25X1

In open and often rancorous debate among union leaders, advocates of the former approach have insisted that unions must build a solid organization for the future and should, at least for the time being, avoid overt political action that risks government repression. This group includes many of the white-led, unaffiliated black unions—who, although leftist in ideology, view patience and caution as sound near-term tactics in support of long-range political objectives—as well as many FOSATU unions that are committed to traditional economic goals as a matter of both basic philosophy and policy. In addition, all three federations open to blacks—TUCSA, CUSA, and FOSATU—have, at least until recently, pursued relatively moderate and apolitical trade union objectives. Their goals have been primarily better wages and, in FOSATU's case, recognition agreements; all have worked as much as possible within the government's registration and bargaining system. 25X1

The hallmarks of the unaffiliated emerging unions, in contrast, have been their refusal to register with the government, their rejection of the state's bargaining apparatus, and their emphasis on direct worker participation in union affairs—as manifested in their preference for shop-floor rather than industrywide bargaining. These unions, moreover, have been much more vocal and sometimes militant in their refusal to distinguish between political and economic objectives. As a result of their confrontational attitude toward the state, they have been branded "political" unions and have borne the brunt of repressive measures that have included the detention, arrest, and banning of their leadership.

25X1

The radicals in the movement emphasize the need for enrolling a large and diffuse membership—without attention to organizational detail or industrial concentration—and then using the union as a platform from which to attack issues in the political arena, such as inadequate housing for blacks and the "independence" of black homelands. This group has included SAAWU, MACWUSA, and GAWU and is typically led by blacks. Except for SAAWU, these unions tend to be small and poorly organized.

25X1

Although unions everywhere have an inherent tendency to be occupied with narrow economic issues, we believe this has been reinforced by conditions in South Africa that make political expression by blacks dangerous. But these same conditions make many labor issues almost indistinguishable from political ones, and have compelled virtually all black unions—from militant to moderate—to pay at least lipservice to political issues in order to establish credibility in the black community. Some of the unaffiliated and unregistered unions, however, have been more politically bold than the FOSATU or CUSA unions, whose leaders do not feel that the unions are strong enough to engage in political activism.

25X1

International Labor Connections. Another issue of controversy among black unions is that of contacts with and financial support from international and foreign labor organizations. In the sometimes bitter and open power struggle between unions, those without international ties have tried to use the issue against rivals that have them.

25X1

CUSA, for example, has extensive ties to both Western governments and foreign labor organizations. Older CUSA officials have had longstanding relations with the United States, many of them having visited the United States on US Government or AFL-CIO grants and training programs administered through the African-American Labor Conference. Because of these connections, however, CUSA's critics have accused it of having links to US intelligence agencies and of being an instrument of the US policy of constructive engagement with Pretoria that is criticized by many South African blacks. According to US Embassy reporting, CUSA's general secretary was also concerned last year that black liberation groups would accuse CUSA of being a "Western stooge," not only because of its US relationships, but because it had recently become the first South African affiliate of the Western-oriented, Geneva-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

25X1

Despite these concerns, a number of CUSA unions and others—including FOSATU affiliates, BAWU, and GWU—have been willing to maintain continued, though discrete, contact with the US Government in particular, and with the AFL-CIO through the African-American Labor Conference. Moreover, the general secretary of CUSA's National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)—the most powerful of the newly formed black miners' unions—was a participant in the US Government–sponsored International Visitor Program (IVP) earlier this year. In contrast, MACWUSA and SAAWU officials refused to meet with an AFL-CIO delegation last year, and the US Embassy reports that a SAAWU official has branded as "puppets" those unions that work with the AFL-CIO.

25X1

Black unions have been ambivalent about accepting foreign financial support and cautious about the means by which it is channeled to them. Funds from overseas unions and international labor federations enable some black unions to function better and, in some cases, even to survive. At the same time,

however, they foster dependence and, therefore, vulnerability should the funds be cut off and may allow unions to exaggerate their true strength. 25X1

Some US and other official Western funding to black unions is channeled through the ICFTU because of the sensitivity of black unions about direct relations with Western governments, according to the US Embassy. Although FOSATU is accepting funding from the ICFTU, which counts many US members, it refuses to accept US offers under the IVP program. FOSATU and GWU also have refused so far to respond to an offer of US financial assistance to be channeled through the AFL-CIO as part of a new program of support for organized labor—both white and nonwhite—in South Africa. 25X1

According to press and US Embassy reports, FOSATU and many individual black unions are funded by West European unions and labor bodies, and CUSA is heavily dependent on external funding—especially from the ICFTU. Financial transfers to black unions are often handled through third parties in South Africa, however, to avoid publicity and currency controls. In comparison, the white-led TUCSA stresses its financial self-reliance and independence. 25X1

Union Performance

The years since 1978 have been turbulent ones for industrial relations in South Africa as black workers have developed an increasing sense of their economic power and have become more assertive in exercising it. Successful unions, drawing their strength from careful recruiting, strong leadership, and attention to grass-roots organization, have applied this strength through a variety of tactics. The onset of recession has had a mixed impact on union performance, inhibiting militance but not preventing continued union formation and growth. 25X1

Democratic Unionism

All independent black unions are committed to some form of worker participation or "democratic unionism," but practices vary widely. Shop stewards have assumed vital roles in many unions and represent an essential leadership group. They are held accountable by ordinary members on the factory floor and are the basic point of contact between workers and their union. 25X1

Reliance on shop stewards has enabled many unions to build strength and leadership from the bottom up. FOSATU affiliates, for example, are characterized by this lower level leadership which emphasizes shop-floor issues. By mid-1982, FOSATU unions reportedly had more than 1,500 shop-floor stewards—more than any other union group. 25X1

Although as a federation FOSATU emphasizes strong central control, it believes that its affiliates also must build a strong organizational structure and that they must emphasize discipline and restraint rather than radical rhetoric if they are to serve their members more effectively and withstand government harassment. Black shop stewards have been so successful in some companies that white unions have begun to train their own stewards in more effective organizational and bargaining methods. 25X1

In contrast, some CUSA affiliates as well as some of the militant unaffiliated unions such as MWASA, SAAWU, and MACWUSA have adopted mass participatory democracy as their stated goal for union operations. According to South African labor observers, however, these unions have shown a greater tendency in practice to rely on charismatic leaders at the expense of organizational development and, as a result, have been vulnerable to a loss of strength, or at least of momentum, if the leadership is removed. For example, the death last year in an auto accident of the president of the Black Municipal Workers' Union severely hampered both the unity and rebuilding of this unregistered and unaffiliated union following its defeat in a 1980 strike, while the repeated arrest and detention of SAAWU's top officials has slowed that union's formerly robust growth. 25X1

Some unions have taken democratic unionism to extremes. The US Embassy reports that the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU), a FOSATU affiliate, apparently will not make the simplest decision without first holding a workers meeting. In the

cases of most such unions, however, only a few individuals are usually able to exert any real leadership, and relatively few workers have an opportunity to make any impact. 25X1

Tactics

Recruiting. Rivalries among competing black unions have affected recruiting practices and also have contributed to the surge in strikes and industrial unrest that has accompanied union growth. Some unions have created offshoots merely to compete for members with rivals:

- CUSA formed a new affiliate in 1982, the NUM, to organize black miners in competition with an unaffiliated and unregistered union, the Black Mine Workers' Union.

- Black workers at a Ford plant—voicing disgruntlement with the handling of their grievances by the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU) during a strike—broke away in early 1981 and, with the support of an activist black community organization in Port Elizabeth, formed MACWUSA.

- In 1981, MACWUSA established a new union, GWUSA, to organize among all the nonauto-workers in Port Elizabeth, apparently in competition with existing FOSATU unions.

Such competition has been viewed by some union leaders as a healthy way of keeping union officials responsive to their membership 25X1

There has been less competition among independent black unions, however, than between them and the parallel black unions established by white unions. For example, much of the organizing and recruiting effort of independent unions has been focused on industrial sectors where many black workers are already represented by parallel unions such as those belonging to TUCSA. This is so partly because leaders of the independent unions regard the parallel unions to be little more than devices to ensure white control of black labor and partly because it is somewhat easier both to recruit workers who are already familiar with unions and to bargain in industries where employers are used to dealing with organized labor. 25X1

White unions, however, have begun to respond to growing encroachment on their territory and poaching of their members by independent black unions. TUCSA's president has declared that "illegal" strikers—a category that, technically at least, includes virtually all black strikers—should be prosecuted. He also has warned employers not to become involved in struggles between unions and not to be "intimidated" into support of independent black unions at the expense of established ones. 25X1

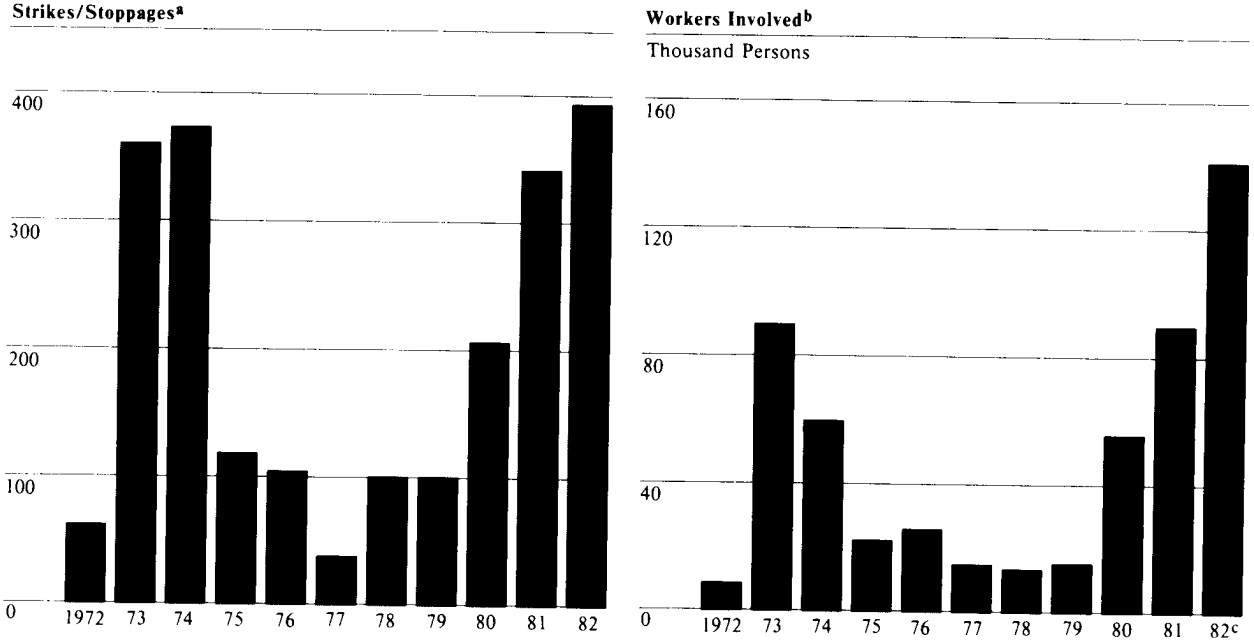
Industrial Action. The primary weapon in disputes has been the strike, but union tactics in disputes have also included appeals for international pressure against multinational firms and the use of consumer boycotts against domestic producers. 25X1

The number of strikes and other work stoppages rose dramatically in 1978 in anticipation of new labor legislation and continued at the same level in 1979. The level of strikes then doubled in 1980 and rose again by 65 percent in 1981, when a record number of black workers was involved. Although another new high for strikes was set in 1982, the rate and average duration of strikes fell substantially at year's end—despite bitter and prolonged strikes by autoworkers and dockworkers—after the onset of the recession. 25X1

In our view, the increases in strikes during this period were clearly related to the growth of unionism among blacks, although not all strikes were directly linked to unions. For example, labor unrest in the mines—which involved 70,000 workers in July 1982—has been a perennial event even though black miners were not unionized successfully until this year. 25X1

Although wage demands have been the principal issue in job actions by black unions, other issues—including union recognition and other local shop-floor grievances—have also triggered walkouts and strikes. Unions have been especially quick to reject arbitrary control by management over such issues as plant-level bargaining, recognition of shop-floor stewards, layoff procedures and severance pay during the economic slowdown, and reinstatement of dismissed union members. 25X1

Figure 5
Black Strike Activity: 1972-82



[a] Data have been drawn from a number of open sources and may differ from official South African Government statistics which include only those incidents reported to the Ministry of Manpower.

[b] Data are rounded to the nearest hundred.

[c] Not including 100,000 workers who participated in a brief work stoppage over the death of union organizer Neil Aggett.

25X1

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Strikes have also resulted from government policy actions. A series of strikes in early 1981 in the eastern Cape was triggered by proposed legislation that would have prevented workers from withdrawing their pension contributions when they changed jobs. As a result of intense labor opposition, Pretoria scrapped the proposals.

25X1

So far, no workers have gone on strike over larger, nonworkplace issues such as laws that restrict the ability of blacks to live and work in cities. Nor has South Africa yet experienced an industrywide strike by blacks, although the GWU threatened one last year against the nation's docks, and several other well-organized unions are capable of such an action. We believe the unions are reluctant to take such action, in part because labor leaders fear the government crackdown that this might provoke—especially if it were in a strategic industry.

25X1

Strikes are often a gamble, even for well-supported unions, and labor leaders often advise workers—sometimes unsuccessfully—against engaging in premature strikes or striking indiscriminately over every grievance. Much of the initial success of many black unions, however, has been traceable to the militant mood of the workers. Union leaders have complained that discontent at the shop-floor level has been difficult even for moderate unions to contain; at least two important strikes in 1980 were initiated by workers, with the union drawn in afterward.

25X1

Some union officials have learned the hard way about the risks of an unsuccessful strike. This was the case for the leadership of the Black Municipal Workers'

Table 3
Distribution of Strikes and Work Stoppages, 1981

	Number	Percent [a]
Geographic Region	**342**	**100.0**
Pretoria-Johannesburg	94	27.5
Western Cape Province	10	2.9
Eastern Cape Province	101	29.5
Durban-Pietermaritzburg	64	18.7
Orange Free State and Northern Cape	15	4.4
Other	58	17.0
Economic Sector	**342**	**100.0**
Agriculture		
Mining	8	2.3
Manufacturing	235	68.7
Electricity		
Construction	36	10.5
Trade and accommodation services	31	9.1
Transport and communication	22	6.4
Government and services	10	2.9
Issues	**342**	**100.0**
Wages	149	43.6
Wages and another issue	15	4.4
Union matters	26	7.6
Disciplinary measures	52	15.2
Working conditions and benefits	35	10.2
Pensions	50	14.6
Other/unknown	15	4.4

[a] Because of rounding, data may not add to totals given.

25X1

Union after its strike in 1980 against the Johannesburg City Council. The newly formed union had called the strike to demonstrate its strength and demand recognition. It was one of the largest strikes against a single employer in South African history. Beginning with 10,000 workers, it grew as other workers walked off their jobs in sympathy. The City Council refused to negotiate with the municipal workers, however, and the strike was crushed when the police "deported" many of the migrant workers—who made up the bulk of the union's membership—back to their homelands. In the wake of the strike, the union went into eclipse.

25X1

Even some of the unions regarded as militant, such as MACWUSA, are wary of relying too heavily on strikes—preferring to negotiate if possible—because it is the workers who bear the greatest costs in a strike. Nonetheless, these unions, while politically oriented, owe much of their success to the concessions they have won on workplace issues:

- MWASA achieved a large wage increase from two large English newspaper groups last year.
- SAAWU is credited with raising productivity in plants it has organized because grievances are communicated and resolved more effectively.

25X1

Multinational firms operating in South Africa have continued to be popular targets for recruitment drives and job action by independent black unions, probably in part because of their international visibility and vulnerability to pressure. Unionization among black workers exceeds 60 percent in most multinational automobile firms, for example. During strikes against such firms, unions have sometimes attempted to enlist sympathy in the firms' home country for their demands. In addition, Western firms in South Africa are under public pressure to conform to codes of conduct—such as the Sullivan and EC codes—which make them more susceptible to some union demands.[7] Encouraged by their success with such companies, unions have fostered rising expectations among the rank and file that contribute to demands for continued gains.

25X1

[7] As a result of intense international scrutiny of the employment practices of international businesses operating in South Africa, various voluntary codes of conduct were adopted in 1977 and 1978: the nongovernmental Sullivan code for US firms, the EC code for West European firms, and the Canadian Government code. All of the codes call on employers to allow workers the freedom of association and to recognize unions. They have been criticized by independent black unions who argue that the codes do not go far enough—especially in the areas of specifying corporate social and community responsibilities—and that compliance should be mandatory. The codes have, nevertheless, had considerable impact through moral suasion and a demonstration effect, having apparently influenced the South African Consultative Committee on Labor Affairs (SACCOLA) to develop its own code for domestic firms.

25X1

The growth of black consumer power during the past decade has created a potential for boycotts to become an increasingly effective union weapon. According to press reports, black wage growth during the 1970s reduced the overall ratio of white pay to that of blacks from 5.8 to 1 to 4.3 to 1. Nonetheless, union boycotts of consumer goods are difficult to orchestrate in practice. An effective consumer boycott requires a union that is well organized nationwide through solidarity with other unions and that can enlist the cooperation of sympathetic nonlabor groups. A boycott is also easier if it involves a well-known, name-brand product for which substitutes are available. The difficulties in mounting a boycott have been illustrated by SAAWU's unsuccessful attempt over the past two years to boycott a multinational candy producer in South Africa. Some unions, however, have used boycotts successfully:

- In 1979, a large and well-coordinated boycott was carried out against South Africa's leading pasta producer over the issue of union recognition. The company, which refused to negotiate with unregistered AFCWU, was hit especially hard by lost sales of its cornmeal product, a staple of blacks.

- The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, a FOSATU affiliate, backed up a threatened legal strike in 1981 against the subsidiary of an international toiletries firm by setting in motion a boycott. As a result, the company gave in—after three years of resistance—to the union's demands for recognition and for wages to be negotiated at the factory level rather than through the government-controlled system of bargaining. 25X1

Bargaining. South Africa has complex official machinery for collective bargaining and resolution of industrial relations disputes. Although the white and parallel black unions of TUCSA favor participation in the official industrial council system, few of the independent black unions—whether registered or not—have been willing so far to engage in the lengthy and cumbersome official process, which can delay resolution of a grievance for months. In addition, most independent black unions have acknowledged that they are not yet fully representative and do not feel strong enough to negotiate for an entire industry—especially when they must share power on such councils with representatives of white labor, whom they do not trust. 25X1

Independent black unions have preferred instead to obtain recognition agreements from individual employers and negotiate with them through shop-floor bargaining. Here their strength is relatively greater than at the industrywide level preferred by employers, and checkoff privileges for dues collection provided by recognition agreements ensure a stronger financial base for unions. Plant-level bargaining, moreover, is consistent with the unions' emphasis on direct worker participation. The GWU, for example, insists that bargaining be conducted by committees of workers rather than by "union bureaucrats." 25X1

Independent black unions have also voiced skepticism about mediation and arbitration—which they have characterized as additional devices for removing authority from workers. Earlier this year, however, the Commercial, Catering, and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) became the first such union to use mediation to settle a pay dispute, and other unions have begun allowing mediation clauses to be included in recognition agreements. 25X1

Most of the independent unions that have been willing to participate in industrial councils are CUSA affiliates. Last year, however, CUSA's national conference passed resolutions harshly critical of industrial councils—an indication of the rifts developing within CUSA over tactics, according to the US Embassy. Although it continued to leave decisions on registration and industrial councils to its affiliates, CUSA promised to support those who wanted to reject the official system. The shift in policy, however, did not prevent one CUSA affiliate from joining an industrial council for the first time 25X1

Some employers are willing to accept limited plant-level bargaining, but prefer that wages, in particular, be negotiated at the industry level. One drawback to

Industrial Conciliation in South Africa

Registration with the government allows a union to participate fully in the official labor relations dispute resolution machinery. The official conciliation system was designed for industry-based unions that were expected to seek negotiating rights at the industry-wide level and to engage in collective bargaining on a centralized, bureaucratic basis.

25X1

Many independent black unions, however, have not limited their organizing effort to a single industry, have refused to apply for registered status, and have instead sought and won individual recognition agreements with employers. As a result of the unions' actions, two systems of bargaining now exist effectively side by side in South Africa: statutory collective bargaining—carried out under the officially sanctioned system—and nonstatutory collective bargaining—accomplished in terms of individual union recognition agreements with employers.

25X1

Official Structure

The statutory system includes the following elements:

***Registration**—Unions apply to the Industrial Registrar in the Department of Manpower to be registered on an industry-specific basis, for specified categories of workers of a given race, and for a defined geographic area.*

***Work Councils**—These may be established by an employer and his workers on a multiracial basis where a union does not exist. They allow direct worker-management discussion of conditions of employment.*

***Industrial Councils**—Dating from the original Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, these are voluntary bodies formed by employers' organizations and registered trade unions for the purpose of negotiating matters of mutual interest, such as hours, wages, and fringe benefits. Agreements are enforced by the state. Councils are established for specific industries either in regional areas or for the entire country and consist of an equal number of employer and union representatives.*

***Conciliation Boards**—Temporary bodies set up at the request of any one party to consider specific disputes in cases where an Industrial Council does not exist.*

***Industrial Court**—Appointed by the Minister of Manpower, it functions as a court of law and rules on disputes arising out of labor law. It is tasked with developing and defining the concept of an "unfair labor practice" through the precedents established by its decisions.*

***National Manpower Commission**—An appointed body, it includes representatives of trade unions and advises the Minister of Manpower on all labor matters. It has subpoena powers and may investigate any issue concerned with industrial relations.*

Dispute Resolution

In the event that a dispute cannot be resolved by an Industrial Council or Conciliation Board, a mediator may be requested by both parties or appointed unilaterally by the Minister of Manpower. Arbitration may also be invoked—either as an alternative to or following mediation—by majority vote of an Industrial Council or Conciliation Board. Recourse to the Industrial Court is reserved primarily for cases involving alleged unfair labor practices, but these must be referred first to an Industrial Council or Conciliation Board. Only after the proscribed and lengthy official procedures have been followed can a union undertake a legal strike.

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industrial councils perceived by some white as well as black workers, however, is that centralized decisions on wages tend to be based on what the least profitable employer in the industry can afford to pay. This emerged as a problem this year for the metals industry industrial council. Consequently, there has been an effort by unions of all races to have industrial councils set minimum wages for the industry, with unions then free to seek further increases in separate negotiations with individual employers. Expectedly, this has been resisted by employers.

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Rejection of the industrial council system by most unions has had several drawbacks, including tougher resistance by some employers to plant-level negotiations and difficulty for individual unions in conducting the several simultaneous negotiations that result from bargaining separately with each individual employer

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Probably in recognition of these concerns, FOSATU adopted in 1982 a policy that allowed affiliates to join industrial councils provided that shop-floor rights and plant-level bargaining were not precluded. As a result, some FOSATU unions have recently shown a willingness to reconsider joining industrial councils. In February this year, for example, MAWU announced it would apply to join the metals industry industrial councils.

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MAWU plans to use industrial council participation as a tactic for maintaining its momentum during the economic slump. It has continued to insist that bargaining at the industry level should supplement but not replace plant-level negotiations and that workers should retain the right to veto industrial council decisions—demands that even white unions on the council find unacceptable.

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Unregistered and unaffiliated unions have, for their part, remained steadfast in opposition to official bargaining and have sought to develop alternative structures. For example, the GWU initiated discussions last year that would establish industrywide bargaining outside the official system for dockworkers at the nation's major ports. This would be the first such formal arrangement outside the official system.

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Impact of Recession

South Africa's recession, now in its second year, appears to have played a part in reducing the number of labor disputes since late 1982. Unions are restrained by workers' concerns over losing their jobs—press reports indicate as many as 800,000 layoffs of blacks in the past two years—and have turned their attention to such issues as job security, layoff procedures, and severance pay. Employers have shown a greater resistance to labor demands during the bargaining process and a willingness to dismiss workers engaging in illegal strikes. Auto producers held out successfully last year in a long strike over wages that at times brought the industry to a standstill.

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Black membership in registered unions rose by more than 50 percent in 1982, according to official statistics, but virtually all of the increase took place in mixed-race unions that have opened their rolls to blacks. In the view of most observers, much of this growth can be attributed to closed shop agreements that forced blacks to join white-led unions. In contrast, white, Colored, and Indian union membership has risen by only about 4 or 5 percent.

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There are indications, however, that many of the better organized of the independent black unions also experienced continued and substantial growth. Although some of these unions lost members—and, therefore, financial and bargaining strength—through layoffs, others have had strong growth. The new NUM has enjoyed strong growth despite being founded in the midst of a recession, and CCAWUSA grew in 1982 as it recruited in the previously unorganized retail trade sector. Despite their unsuccessful strike in 1982, autoworker unions have been helped recently by the companies' competitive struggle to maintain market share in the face of declining sales and to prepare for the anticipated recovery. These factors have helped unions by encouraging employers to resist layoffs of relatively skilled black workers

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Political Action

Present legislation forbids overt political activity by unions, but it has been difficult in practice for unions to determine where the limits are. The very nature of

South African society has made it difficult for independent black unions to separate fully labor and related economic issues from the broad range of black economic, social, and political grievances. For example, although most strikes have involved wage and union recognition issues, many South African observers claim that a substantial portion—perhaps a third—involve opposition to apartheid in the workplace, such as the segregation of lavatory and dining facilities. 25X1

Moreover, some unions also have intentionally taken on the role of spokesman for the concerns of non-unionized black workers and the local black community at large. According to press reports, for example, the GWU is widely perceived as the voice of black labor in the Cape Town area. SAAWU plays a similar role in the eastern Cape, where it has argued that transport and rent are the main worker issues. 25X1

These developments have prompted white officials of TUCSA to observe that the battle for the "hearts and minds" of black workers extends from the shop floor into the townships. This approach has not been without drawbacks, however. Some unions that have stressed their roots in the community—such as SAAWU and MACWUSA—have also tended to carry over to the workplace the racial and tribal characteristics that divide the community and thus prevent solidarity on what would otherwise be purely workplace issues. 25X1

Black unions and labor federations have also taken public and explicit positions on national and unambiguously political issues:

- SAAWU, which pursues a declared policy of linking workers to the wider political struggle, called in 1981 for the release of imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela.
- MAWU and AFCWU were among several unions that issued a statement condemning proposed legislation to increase residency and other non-job-related restrictions on urban blacks.
- At its national congress last year, FOSATU adopted resolutions criticizing the homelands policy and affirming the independent role of unions in the "popular struggle."
- MWASA, SAAWU, and CCAWUSA were among unions that launched an attack last year on the government's policy of detention without trial. 25X1

Pretoria's proposed constitutional reforms, which would grant limited political rights to Coloreds and Indians but not to blacks, have recently become a rallying point for political action on the part of some black unions acting in concert with other black political and community organizations. Two broad-based fronts of opposition to the reforms have been created recently with union participation:

- Leaders of SAAWU and GAWU participated in January 1983 in a conference organized by Marxist Indian leaders to coordinate opposition to the proposed reforms.
- As a result of the January conference, a United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed in May and was joined by CUSA. The general secretary of CUSA also is on the organizing committee of the National Forum (NF), another political opposition front that was formed in early June with the support of SAAWU and GAWU.
- CCAWUSA participated in the organizational meetings of both the UDF and the NF, but has not joined either of them formally. 25X1

According to US Embassy reporting, the fact that the political philosophies of the UDF and the NF are almost identical, respectively, with those of the outlawed black liberation movements—the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC)—made union participation in these groups all the more provocative and risky. The UDF has accepted the nonracial principles of the ANC's "Freedom Charter," while the NF has adopted a black consciousness–style "manifesto" similar to that of the PAC. 25X1

Moreover, competition between the two fronts threatens to deepen existing ideological differences among black unions, as well as within the wider black community. For example, both SAAWU and GAWU have withdrawn from the NF in favor of the UDF, accusing the NF of "betrayal" of the liberation struggle. Despite the apparent differences in racial

ideology, however, a prominent black community leader has told the US Embassy that the real issue dividing the two opposition fronts is concern among some blacks about possible ANC and Communist control of the UDF. 25X1

Despite the willingness of so many unionists to assume a community role and to pursue a political agenda, no leaders of national stature who could command a broad-based following have yet emerged from the black labor movement. Nonetheless, according to the US Embassy, Thozamile Gqweta—the often-detained president of SAAWU—may have been moving toward assuming a more national role by his active participation in the formation of the UDF. The US Embassy also believes that Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of NUM, is an exceptionally capable union leader who could attain national stature if his union is successful. 25X1

Unions and Liberation Groups

The most difficult tactical question for unions is policy toward the outlawed black liberation movements, with whom any formal link would be illegal, and toward the South African Communist Party's (SACP) legal but exiled trade union arm, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). Most black unions have tried to stress their political independence and their refusal to be manipulated by the state, management, white labor, or black political groups. 25X1

Labor leaders fear, probably correctly, that the government will use any hint of union collaboration with the ANC or PAC to discredit or crush unions it views as troublesome.[8] They are adamant that, despite worker sympathy for ANC aims, the insurgent group has no explicit or formal role in their organizations. Nor are many workers enthusiastic about demonstrating political militance. Some workers in the eastern Cape, for example, refused to respond recently to ANC leaflets and other exhortations calling for demonstrations on important anniversaries of the liberation struggle. 25X1

[8] Union fears are not unfounded. According to the US Embassy, the South African Defense Force distributed a document to business leaders in the Transvaal in which it identified 10 unions as ANC oriented and "prorevolutionary." Pretoria, however, has so far not been able to prove its allegations in court. 25X1

Other reasons also contribute to the uneasiness of most unions toward the ANC. Even though FOSATU is openly committed to political change, for example, it still sees trade unionism as an independent part of the wider political struggle, and one which must maintain a separate identity in order to protect workers. FOSATU's general secretary warned last year that his organization will place workers' interests before those of any popular political movement—a thinly veiled reference to the ANC, in our view. 25X1

According to South African academic observers of the labor scene, moderate black union leaders are aware that independent unions have not always fared well elsewhere in Africa after strongly centralized Marxist-oriented national liberation movements have come to power. Moreover, we believe that black labor leaders remain wary of the ANC's intentions and seek to ensure, as one FOSATU member said at a recent union congress, that if the ANC comes to power it will be controlled by the workers. 25X1

Nevertheless, identification among black workers with the aims and tactics of the nonracial ANC has grown much stronger in recent years, according to the US Embassy, forcing even FOSATU to redefine its political position in order to deflect criticism of its apolitical stance. Even the staunch advocate of black consciousness, CUSA, has shown signs of inching toward the ANC's more popular nonracial approach, according to the US Embassy, as its older and moderate leadership has been challenged by more militant younger members.[9] Both FOSATU and CUSA adopted in 1982 distinctly more activist postures on political issues. 25X1

Possible ties between black trade unions and black liberation groups have been a major concern of the

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South African security services, and the actions of many unions and their leaders could give Pretoria cause for suspicion:

- SAAWU and GAWU have been consistently at the forefront of political action that resonates with the aims of the ANC. According to the US Embassy, leaders of both unions have played the role of SACTU surrogates at many meetings of political opposition groups.

- The general secretary of CUSA attended an international meeting recently that was attended by ANC, SACTU, and PAC representatives, according to US Embassy reporting.

- The ANC flag was displayed last year at the head of a funeral procession for white union activist Neil Aggett,

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- A former general secretary and founder of GAWU broke away in 1982—accusing the leadership of using the union for the work of the ANC and SACTU, according to the US Embassy—and formed the Brush and Cleaners Workers' Union.

Despite this largely circumstantial evidence of infiltration and cooperation, however, the US Embassy believes that neither the ANC or SACTU is yet in control of any important segment of the black trade union movement.

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White Responses to Organized Black Labor

Government

In the wake of unions' militant response to reform, Pretoria has applied either the "carrot" or the "stick" as the situation has required. It has been accommodating to unions that have confined their activities to work-related issues, but has reacted harshly to those unions that have engaged in political activity, especially those that it suspects of having ties with the ANC. This policy also reflects in part the conflicting views toward reform within the government. The Department of Manpower, for example, has been basically reformist. Other departments—and some of the parastatal corporations—have adopted a much more hardline attitude that, in our view, probably reflects a fear by many conservative Afrikaners—who make up most of the bureaucracy—that they are losing control of the government to "capitalists and reformers."

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Accommodation. Initially, Pretoria worked to prevent the development of a dual system of industrial relations. As companies have been increasingly willing to recognize unregistered unions and as bargaining has shifted to the company level at the expense of the official system, however, Pretoria has moved to adjust to rather than oppose these trends:

- The government has criticized the slowness of some employers to respond to reforms, taken steps to streamline and speed up the dispute machinery, and has even showed a greater willingness to accept a legitimate role for unregistered unions. One unregistered union has already been allowed to participate in an industrial council, and pending legislation would grant unregistered unions full access to state sanctioned bargaining and dispute machinery beginning in 1984.

- The National Manpower Commission is conducting an investigation into the closed shop system and may propose changes that would give independent black unions greater access to firms heretofore controlled by white unions.

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Black unions have also been helped by judicial interpretation of labor laws. Earlier this year, four FOSATU unions won a precedent-setting appeal in which a high court ruled that workers have common interests regardless of race and that the government, therefore, does not have the right to control the racial composition of unions. Pretoria has so far not made any attempt to reverse the ruling or offset it by enacting new legislation.

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Harassment. Pretoria has been caught off guard by some black labor activities and, fearing even a temporary loss of control, has reacted aggressively. One of the most evident ways in which Pretoria has attempted to counter the increase in community-oriented and politically motivated black labor activism is through

The African National Congress: Focusing on Black Unions

We believe that ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP) leaders recognize fully that their organizations are a long way from posing a real threat to white control of South Africa and that the current terrorist campaign will not soon evolve into a viable insurgency. As the two look for other ways to promote their goals, they have focused increasingly on the growing black labor movement. We believe that the ANC's Soviet sponsors also have doubts about the long-term prospects of the ANC's military campaign and are interested in using the ANC's appeal among blacks to gain control of the black labor movement

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ANC Acting President Tambo told the press in June 1983 that political action, notably in the trade unions, is the ANC's first priority, but the actual role of the ANC—or for that matter, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)—the black labor union movement has been difficult to determine with confidence. While many unions are in open sympathy with the aims of the ANC, we have no evidence of explicit links between union leaders and the ANC, the SACP, or their labor arm, SACTU. Similarly, although CUSA shares a black consciousness ideology with the PAC, formal ties between the two groups are not apparent.

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According to the US Embassy, however, the ANC had until recently tried to link itself to FOSATU, compelling FOSATU to issue denials. Moreover, press reports 25X1 *claim that the ANC and the SACP—through SACTU—provide funds to some registered as well as unregistered black unions.* 25X1 *the Soviets provide scholarships for ANC recruits to study trade unionism in the USSR. Despite the absence of any hard evidence, we believe such aid flows almost certainly exist.* 25X1

The main vehicle for SACP access to black labor is SACTU, based in Lusaka, Zambia. Founded in 1954, SACTU operates today in self-imposed exile and acts, in our view, as the labor arm of the SACP.

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SACP literature in recent years has stressed the importance of SACTU and the black trade unions. 25X1

On balance, however, we believe that the ANC has had only limited success so far in achieving direct influence in the black emerging unions. Union leaders, for their part, are highly sensitive to the dangers that explicit ANC connections would pose to the survival of individual unions. 25X1

official harassment of unions and their leaders. Even as Pretoria has continued to implement Wiehahn-inspired reforms, it has extended controls to unregistered unions and also unleashed tough police action against militant labor leaders. Repressive measures have included arrests and bannings,[10] stepped-up prosecution of strikers, and tightened enforcement of influx control:

- More than 200,000 blacks were arrested in 1982 for past law and other influx control violations—a 27-percent increase over 1981 and nearly double the level of 1980.
- By mid-1982, according to press reports, about a third of all detainees in South Africa were trade union activists, primarily from unregistered unions such as SAAWU.
- Pretoria in 1982 enacted a new law, the Intimidation Act, which enables it to arrest and detain union officials under the pretext of preventing workers from being intimidated into participating in strikes. 25X1

[10] In South Africa, a banned individual is restricted to one geographic location and is prohibited from meeting with more than one individual at a time publicly or privately. 25X1

Although Pretoria's harassment campaign predates the 1979 reforms (26 labor activists were banned in 1976, for example), harassment since that time has been stepped up markedly (see appendix B). Moreover, the chief of the South African Security Police told US Embassy officials last year that it would be necessary to "eliminate from the labor unions the more radical elements." 25X1

Detention of union officials has been the most common tactic employed, with the clear intent, in our judgment, to disrupt union organizing efforts. Although the majority of those arrested or detained have eventually been released, the government attempted in a few cases to prove the existence of an ANC-led conspiracy in the labor movement. During several trials in 1982, however, the government's distinction between union activity and subversion appeared hazy, and the courts refused to accept the state's argument that the union leaders being prosecuted were guilty merely by associating with SACTU or sympathizing with the aims of outlawed liberation groups. 25X1

SAAWU, GWU, AFCWU, and MACWUSA are generally acknowledged to be the top targets for harassment because of their efforts to mobilize community action to protest such issues as increases in rents and transport fares and in some cases because of government suspicions that they have ties to the ANC. MWASA's black consciousness–oriented officials have also been subject to frequent detentions and bannings. The US Embassy believes that this probably reflects MWASA's potential influence on public opinion through the media, although a senior union leader told US officials that the most recent bannings may have been because of unspecified involvement of union members' with the PAC. 25X1

Pretoria also has enlisted the willing support of black homeland authorities and of some employers in carrying out its harassment. Among the so-called independent homelands, only Bophuthatswana has legalized trade union activities within its borders. The others—Ciskei, Transkei, and Venda—have been openly hostile to unions, according to US Embassy and press reports. 25X1

In the case of SAAWU, its leadership in voicing grievances on behalf of the black community has placed the union in open confrontation with "independent" Ciskei, which borders the industrial ports of East London and Port Elizabeth and has become the home "country" of thousands of black workers there. SAAWU's campaign against the granting of "independence" to the Ciskei in 1981 and its opposition to the homeland government since then have resulted in the arrest and detention of union leaders and members, slowing the momentum of what had been the fastest growing black union in South Africa. 25X1

In some instances, Pretoria has intervened directly in labor disputes to protect the interests of employers or of white labor:

- Toward the end of the autoworkers strike late last year, the government created a special fund to compensate nonstrikers—nearly all of whom were whites who would have lost pay if the strike had continued and plants remained shut down.

- Last December, a local government official invoked a ban on all meetings in a black township where MAWU had been successfully organizing employees of a subsidiary of a US firm—thereby preventing union organizing rallies and informational meetings for members—after the firm had requested protection for nonunion workers who refrained from an earlier strike.

- Early this year the government supported actions by a subsidiary of a German firm to cancel the contracts of migrant workers belonging to MAWU, deporting some workers to homelands. 25X1

Pretoria has also demonstrated a sensitivity about outsiders—especially the foreign press—having a role in or probing into labor affairs:

- The local office of a South African correspondent of *The New York Times* was ransacked in July 1982 following publication of his feature story on black labor unions.

- Late last year, a US television crew claimed that the film and soundtrack for a special documentary on labor had been tampered with during a domestic flight in South Africa.

- In 1980, Pretoria prohibited FOSATU from receiving foreign funding—amounting to about $500,000 annually, primarily from West European labor organizations—that the government said was being used to finance strikes. The prohibition was later relaxed, but more stringent reporting requirements were imposed. 25X1

Employers

Acceptance of independent black unions has not come easily; for many firms it has been a process of gradual, sometimes reluctant, adjustment to new realities. Both labor and management have had to endure a period of mutual distrust and of learning how to negotiate. Businessmen, moreover, have had to emulate the lead taken by union officials in seeking training in negotiating tactics and collective bargaining. As both sides have become more sophisticated, strikes have become shorter and less violent, if not less frequent. 25X1

A Period of Adjustment. In the immediate post-Wiehahn period, employers often chose initially to resist independent black unions—even when the unions registered and engaged in normal trade union activities—preferring instead to recognize parallel unions or, in some cases, to form company-sponsored unions that could be controlled by management. Employers often tried to force those black unions to which they did grant recognition to join industrial councils rather than dealing with the shop-floor stewards favored by the unions. Problems often were exacerbated by clumsy handling of day-to-day grievances. The result was that strikes became the frequent reaction of frustrated workers. 25X1

As early as 1980, however, the level of unrest and discontent on the shop floor had become sufficiently serious to cause some elements of the business community—including the powerful Federated Chamber of Industries (FCI)—to modify their approach and become more flexible. The FCI recommended that the only relevant criterion for union recognition should be the extent of worker support for a particular union and that employers should deal with unregistered unions if those were what workers preferred. In addition, the FCI argued that the government should avoid excessive controls over industrial relations. 25X1

Accepting New Realities. In our view and that of most knowledgeable observers, a growing number of employers—when faced with the high cost of labor unrest—have found the alternative of recognizing and dealing fairly with black unions easy to accept. Police have been called in less frequently by employers as a response to strikes and work stoppages—167 times last year, down from 191 in 1981—and even when called have acted with more restraint. The result has been that strikes have often been settled more quickly and with fewer arrests. 25X1

This more accommodating attitude has been characteristic of multinational firms, which sometimes have to justify their continued presence in South Africa to hostile elements in their home countries and are constrained by international codes of employer conduct. Multinational firms have frequently taken the lead in negotiating with and making concessions to black unions—both as the price of labor peace and as part of their public relations effort. In 1979, subsidiaries of two foreign firms, including one from the United States, became the first companies formally to recognize black unions that were unregistered. 25X1

In addition, some of the major South African industrial groups—such as Barlow Rand and the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa—have also shown increasing flexibility toward unregistered unions, as have many smaller domestic firms. The move by the powerful Chamber of Mines last year in opening up black mine labor to union organizers was particularly significant. 25X1

Continuing Resistance. The recalcitrance of South Africa's largest parastatal corporation, the South African Transport Services (SATS), whose operations include the nation's railways and harbors, is an exception to greater employer acceptance of black unions. SATS is the nation's largest single employer, and its work force disproportionately comprises more conservative Afrikaners. Confronted last year with a demand for recognition by the unregistered GWU, which had organized black dockworkers at the country's four major ports, SATS refused to negotiate.

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The corporation took this stand despite widespread support for the GWU by many private employers who would be hurt by a dock shutdown.

Backed by the government through the Minister of Transport, SATS insisted that its own Black Staff Association represented black workers' interests and threatened that actions by "outsiders" such as the GWU would be considered politically motivated. When GWU members engaged in a slowdown, they were fired and returned to their homelands. In our judgment, Pretoria's interest in avoiding appearances of weakness in dealing with a militant and unregistered black union was sharpened by the strong stance against dealings with the GWU taken by the powerful white unions at SATS, which represent 10 percent of the white electorate.

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The deepening of the recession since mid-1982 also has contributed to stiffened employer resistance to some demands by black unions, which have come at the same time that more powerful white unions are demanding that their workers' incomes be protected from double-digit inflation. Protracted recent disputes in the mining, metals, and auto industries have highlighted the dilemma of employers caught between the conflicting demands of black and white labor and have occasionally forced the government to apply informal pressure, if not to intervene directly, on behalf of whites.

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Companies have had a much freer hand in resisting unions where workers are mainly unskilled, as is often the case for general workers' unions. SAAWU has faced this problem. Employers have had their position strengthened by the massive unemployment that prevails in the eastern Cape where SAAWU operates, and they have been able to resort to mass dismissals of strikers who must then return to the Ciskei homeland. SAAWU has found "scabbing" by unemployed workers to be so great a problem that it has attempted, unsuccessfully so far, to organize an Unemployed Workers' Union.

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Constraints on Management. Although some employers are still able to resort to dismissals to break strikes, others feel they are constrained by the small size of the labor pool possessing skills they require. Barriers established years ago to keep blacks from skilled work have eroded steadily under the pressure of labor shortages, with the result that black workers have in many cases become less expendable to their employers. Volkswagen, for example, refused to fire workers belonging to NAAWU during a strike in 1980 because they would have had to rehire them or risk losing the best ones to competitors in the tight skilled-labor market.

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Management also has not been able effectively to exploit the divisiveness that exists within the black labor movement by playing one union off against another. Considering the depth of black resentment against employers and the white system they represent, black unions cannot afford to be perceived as being co-opted by management. As a result, where rival unions have attempted to organize the same work place, management has usually been confronted with escalating demands from both sides as the unions try to outdo one another in demonstrating toughness. In our view, moreover, as long as social and political dissatisfaction among blacks remains unresolved, it will bedevil labor relations. Management will often find itself caught in the middle as workers—who view their social, political, and economic grievances as linked—make demands that employers alone cannot meet.

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White Labor

As early as 1973, a senior adviser to the Prime Minister observed that the government's ability to enact labor reforms necessary to achieve continued economic growth in South Africa would hinge on the good will of white workers. After years of legal protection against competition, white labor and its unions had become complacent and ill equipped to deal with the more competitive and open labor market conditions that ensued with reform. Although some white unions have reacted favorably to reform and have even begun to adopt some of the techniques of black unions and to support organizing efforts among blacks, rightwing unions have continued to resist every aspect of labor reform.

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Limited Support. The South African Boilermakers' Society is representative of individual white unions that have occasionally taken the initiative in support of black labor. The Boilermakers have opened their membership to blacks and early this year took the unusual step of threatening possible industrial action to protest government plans to tighten controls on urban blacks. They have also been supportive of organizing efforts for black miners.

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In 1980, a number of white unions applied for permission to register other racial groups, but they did so on the earlier described "parallel" basis—thereby preserving white control—rather than by applying for the ministerial exemption that would allow for actual racial mixing within branches and on union executive boards. Whites have argued that segregated branches are best for emerging black labor leaders at this early stage of their labor experience. These parallel unions are, however, viewed as puppet organizations by most blacks, according to most South African observers. Black membership in such unions has grown rapidly, but only because of closed shop agreements enjoyed by the parent white unions.

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Most of the white unions that are sympathetic to organized black labor are TUCSA affiliates, but differences in racial organization and political philosophy have created strains and prevented cooperation with the independent black unions. Most white unions are accustomed to working within the state-sanctioned industrial relations framework and, even when sympathetic to black labor, have been uncomfortable with the grass-roots, shop-floor approach of the black unions. According to press reports, friction, poor communication, and misunderstanding have resulted whenever the two types of unions have attempted to work together, such as on industrial councils.

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Opposition. In our view, the rightwing white backlash against labor reform represents the general concern felt by many whites over any movement by blacks toward equal status. White resistance probably springs most intensely, however, from a blue-collar class at the bottom of the white socioeconomic ladder that feels most threatened by the training, advancement, and organization of blacks. Many such whites belong to all-white unions that are affiliated with the ultraconservative South African Confederation of Labor (SACL).

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Many of these whites have been resentful of the losses in income that they have suffered during strikes by black unions. Though there has yet to be violence between white and black workers as a result of a labor dispute in the postreform period, we believe it is a possibility that concerns many employers. Unions for whites employed by SATS, for example, warned independent black unions to stay away during the confrontation last year between SATS and the GWU.

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By far the most reactionary segment of organized white labor is represented by the white Mine Workers' Union (MWU), an SACL affiliate. White miners are among the most conservative of Afrikaner groups. Their struggles in the past for protection against cheap black labor have shaped current attitudes, and they view the establishment of black unions, however circumscribed, as a direct threat to white privilege.

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The MWU was recently given government approval to extend its registration to the steel and other metals industries where it hopes to broaden its base among white workers opposed to labor reform for blacks. MWU gains in these industries are coming at the expense of other white unions that have taken a more moderate stance toward reform.

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Conservative Political Backlash. Pretoria, which had preferred to allow changes in industrial relations to occur gradually through negotiations between employers and white labor, has since 1979 found itself in the position of having to defend its labor reforms against growing rightwing criticism and political opposition. Although the size and influence of the white industrial work force has waned over the long term as its members—especially Afrikaners—have moved steadily into managerial and technical positions, white industrial labor appears still to be a political factor to be reckoned with. In the mines, for example, white labor has so far had virtual veto power over changes in white job reservation—the system of reserving certain jobs for whites. Pretoria, although eliminating statutory reservation, has been unwilling to mandate removal of private agreements between employers and workers—such as those enjoyed by white miners—for fear of the political cost.

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Many whites, but especially industrial blue-collar workers, also have become increasingly susceptible to blandishments from the political right, leading to many defections from the ruling National Party and serious challenges from rightwing parties:

- The ultrarightwing Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP), which in 1979 won an unprecedented 40 percent of the vote in three parliamentary byelections, had its greatest success in blue-collar constituencies. The defections of large numbers of railway and mineworkers from the ruling National Party to the HNP represented a protest against the labor reforms then being proposed.

- Several senior officials of the MWU stood as HNP candidates in the 1981 general election, and, although none of these unionists were elected, the HNP received nearly 30 percent of the Afrikaner vote nationwide. Miners again formed a large bloc of the many blue-collar workers who defected from the National Party.

- In several byelections over the past year, there has been strong support for the HNP and the Conservative Party in mining and industrial districts, with their combined vote exceeding 50 percent of the total in some cases.

Moreover, conservative protest against labor reform has now grown into broader political opposition to the government's constitutional proposals. The strength of the opposition was demonstrated in May this year when Manpower Minister S. P. Botha—the architect of labor reform—was able to retain his seat by only a narrow margin against a rightwing challenge in a parliamentary byelection.

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Outlook

Pretoria's Policies

Changes in the white establishment's thinking on labor relations are clearly related to the gradual shifts that are occurring in broader white attitudes on race relations. For the same reason, further reform in labor, as in other areas in South Africa, is likely to be slow and evolutionary. Pretoria is likely, in our view, to continue its dual policy of applying persuasion and deterrence and will not hesitate to use repressive measures in an effort to control the character and pace of change. The government will continue to allow greater leeway to unregistered and nonracial unions—primarily by attempting to draw them into the official bargaining system—but we anticipate it will crush unions it perceives as too politically militant or as threats to the stability of key economic sectors such as mining or transport. We believe that Pretoria is unlikely to resort to outright banning of any politically activist unions because it can achieve virtually the same result—and incur less international opprobrium—by arresting or detaining union leaders.

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Ultimately, Pretoria's combination of accommodation and repression—and the extent to which black unions will be co-opted or neutralized by it—will be the key determinant of the overall impact of organized black labor on South African society. For the moment, reformers appear to have the upper hand as the government pushes ahead with its plans for constitutional reform, but Pretoria also has become more wary of rightwing opposition. According to US Embassy reporting, a senior South African labor official said earlier this year that labor reform measures had passed the point of no return, but added that remaining "fine tuning and adjustments" would have to await the outcome of constitutional reform. In our judgment, moreover, Pretoria will be wary of introducing additional labor reforms of any significance even after the constitutional reforms are implemented. Nonetheless, changes resulting from the interpretation and application of existing legislation are likely to heighten black expectations and probably increase even further the dissatisfaction of blacks with their continuing exclusion from national political decision making.

25X1

Near-Term Prospects

In the near term, organized black labor will continue to be divided and buffeted by conflicting economic and political pressures—primarily over the question of whether the labor movement should focus on achieving tangible economic gains for workers or become a

vehicle for political expression. In our view, organized black labor will continue to be characterized by both rapid growth and internal dissension as factions favoring one role or the other for the movement strive for the leadership of existing unions and to form new ones. 25X1

There is tremendous scope for increased union membership among blacks in South Africa, in our view, but continued recession will, for the time being, encourage a shakeout in which poorly organized unions that ignore workplace issues will not survive. Unions that pay attention to local grievances, emphasize leadership training, and develop a disciplined and responsive organization are likely, on the other hand, to remain successful. We believe the growth in black membership, even during the recession since 1982, suggests that an upturn in the business cycle will further accelerate the growth of black unions, especially in the economically vital mining sector. 25X1

The overall growth in unionization will, in our view, be accompanied by increased competition within the labor movement, as independent black unions vie with each other and with established mixed-race unions and white-dominated parallel unions. Black unions are especially likely to mount challenges whenever closed shop agreements come up for renewal or in the event the National Manpower Commission rules against closed shops. Decisions by black workers to join a union will remain strongly conditioned by racial and political factors, and we believe independent black unions will fare well in competition with the parallel black affiliates of the white-dominated traditional unions. This will almost certainly exacerbate tensions between the independent black unions and TUCSA and could cause both TUCSA and SACL to step up political pressure on Pretoria for protection. 25X1

In our view, however, black union leaders are more aware now than in the past of the dangers of premature radicalism. Unions probably will become even more careful not to raise worker expectations beyond what union strength can achieve and will attempt a difficult balance between consolidating gains already made and maintaining both organizational momentum and worker commitment. 25X1

Still, when economic recovery begins—probably by mid-1984, in our view—employers are likely to be subject to increasing economic demands from these stronger unions. Strikes probably will continue at their recent high levels because demands by labor can be expected to exceed what businesses will be able or willing to give. Greater bargaining experience and sophistication on the part of both labor leaders and management may, however, help reduce the duration of strikes and the antagonism involved. Over time, the frequency of strikes may diminish as unions become willing to submit disputes to mediation and arbitration—a development we see as likely to continue. 25X1

In the absence of other organized outlets for political expression, unions will continue to act as spokesmen for the black community, sometimes by default rather than by choice. In the past, black protests have often fizzled because of the absence of grass-roots political organizations. Unions already have the means to mobilize large numbers of blacks, and their potential to do so will grow with increased membership. 25X1

Although recent court decisions have undermined some of the government's strategies for the arrest and trial of union activists, some labor leaders will still feel constrained by the state's powers of unlimited detention and banning. Others, however, will almost certainly continue to test the government's tolerance of union involvement in nonworkplace issues—an issue we believe will become increasingly sensitive to Pretoria as unions become stronger and are perceived as greater threats. As a result, we expect a turbulent period for labor leadership in the near term, as individual leaders test the limits of their own courage and of Pretoria's tolerance. 25X1

Because of the many contentious issues within the black labor movement, we believe that prospects are poor in the near to medium term for a successful unity effort—one that would result in significant, coordinated industrial or political action—among major elements of organized black labor. Moreover, Pretoria probably would view any permanent alliance among

emerging unions as ominous—posing the threat of nationwide industrial action that could cripple the economy or segments of it—and would act to prevent it. 25X1

On balance, we expect the overall character of black unions to converge over time on a middle position. Those that have traditionally emphasized workplace issues—such as the affiliates of FOSATU and CUSA—probably will continue to become gradually more activist, engaging in community-oriented rhetoric and action. They will be motivated by the growing politicization of the black community and the workplace that we anticipate will be the natural result of the exclusion of blacks from the process of constitutional reform and from political debate at the national level. At the same time, however, unions that have been functioning primarily as platforms for political rhetoric, such as GAWU and MACWUSA, probably will focus more on developing a stronger organization that is more effective in the workplace. Failure to do so is likely to cause such unions to collapse because of either declining worker support or increased government repression. 25X1

The Longer Term

In our view, the steadily growing importance of black workers to the economy offers them their greatest long-term opportunity to exert pressure—through strikes and other industrial and community actions led by strong unions—for changing the apartheid system, but only slowly and perhaps not for all South African blacks. We believe, in fact, that black unions may themselves come increasingly to represent a black labor elite whose interests are likely to conflict with those of the mass of unemployed and, in the absence of education and training, unemployable blacks. Although only about 20 percent of the total black population is estimated to meet the government's legal requirements for obtaining permanent resident status in an urban area, this group includes about 50 percent of the formally employed black labor force. These permanent workers represent an important body of potential members for union recruitment. Moreover, a recent court decision upholding the claims of these blacks to urban rights, and Pretoria's apparent intent to abide by the ruling, strengthens the position of this important group of workers. 25X1

In contrast, the majority of South Africa's blacks will, for the foreseeable future, be assigned to primarily rural homelands and will be increasingly cut off from access to urban employment, even as legal migrants. Moreover, large numbers of urban blacks will be resettled in rural homelands. As the rural unemployed clamor for a livelihood, employed urban blacks are likely to demand protection for their jobs and wages. Such a division of interests among blacks is the aim of Pretoria's urban and racial policies, which are designed to create and co-opt a stable black middle class as a buffer against revolution. Should Pretoria fail in its effort to divide and co-opt blacks, however, it could be faced with more strident demands for political rights, spearheaded by an organized and disciplined urban black work force capable of triggering unprecedented industrial unrest and economic disruption. Thus, it is unlikely that Pretoria will abandon either its efforts to control the character and pace of change or its use of repressive measures against troublesome unions. In our judgment, the considerable instruments of domestic control available to Pretoria will ensure the success of its strategy for the foreseeable future, but not without periodic outbursts of black protest that may involve violence and provoke a harsh government crackdown in response. 25X1

Implications for the United States

Trends in South Africa's labor movement will continue to have a magnified effect on US firms operating in South Africa, which have a total investment of $2.6 billion. As is widely reported in the South African and international press, US firms have in fact long been in the forefront of corporate efforts to reduce racial discrimination in the workplace and to improve the lot of black workers, and have often joined with unions in pressing for reforms.[11] They have also taken the initiative in recognizing black unions,

[11] Of 342 US businesses in South Africa, 146 have signed the Sullivan code and account for about 72 percent of total employment by US subsidiaries. 25X1

and US automakers in particular have been outspoken in advocating greater economic, civil, and political rights for blacks. As a result, they will continue to be a principal target of industrial action by black unions whose expectations of continued significant concessions have been heightened by the leadership these firms have already shown in enlightened employment practices. [redacted] 25X1

In our view, US firms—always wary about pressures from stockholders and others to disinvest from South Africa—will look increasingly to Washington for guidance on the direction of US policy toward South Africa. This will be especially true with respect to the progress of newly developing relations between the United States and black unions that include funding and training, as well as with respect to the status of the US policy of constructive engagement. At the same time, Pretoria may be tempted to resist efforts by US or other foreign investors on behalf of black labor if it perceives them as unacceptable meddling in South Africa's internal affairs. Similarly, the US-funded AFL-CIO program of support for South African unions could easily become a source of bilateral tension, especially if Pretoria perceives such funding as encouragement to black labor militance. [redacted] 25X1

Appendix A

Early Black Unionism: Lessons From History

Despite white opposition, there have been at least four distinct periods or "waves" of heightened black labor activism and organization in South Africa prior to the 1979 reforms. Each was followed by a period of substantial decline in organizational vigor and effectiveness. The reasons for these cycles are found both in the black labor movement itself and in the legal and political circumstances in which black labor operates in South Africa. Many of these same factors are still at work today and suggest caution to current black labor leaders who are riding the crest of the latest wave of black unionism.

Early Racial Conflicts of Labor

By 1900, blacks were becoming increasingly aware of their growing economic importance and resentful of their inferior wages, especially in the mines. Blacks had by 1918 already struck the gold mines over wages and had been violently suppressed. Until the adoption of this more militant form of protest, blacks had only two avenues by which to express labor discontent: to refuse to be recruited from the tribal areas where they lived, or to desert from the job and thus break their contracts as migrants.

Through the mid-1920s, meanwhile, growing restiveness over the prospect of wage erosion at the hands of cheaper black labor caused white workers to organize the first major labor federations in South Africa. Trade unionism quickly acquired an explicit racial character through formal restrictions on the access of nonwhite labor to skilled jobs, and through the establishment of craft unions exclusively for skilled workers.

Contention between black and white labor was fed by the competing needs of employers and white miners. Employers were driven more by economic concerns than by commitment to whites, and their repeated attempts to supplant whites with cheaper black workers triggered frequent strikes. As a result, conflict along racial lines became an entrenched characteristic within the South African labor movement.

The postwar depression beginning in 1921 put white workers on the defensive by giving employers new incentives to use cheaper black labor. White disgruntlement peaked in 1922 with the Rand Rebellion, an insurrection by white miners that was put down by the Army. Black hopes for advancement were buoyed in 1923 by a law enacted at the urging of employers that gave blacks more access to white cities and by a court ruling that gave them access to skilled mining jobs.

A backlash among white workers brought to power in 1924 a coalition government sympathetic to white labor interests. The new regime enacted a series of legislative measures barring blacks again from skilled work and excluding them from the new state-sanctioned industrial conciliation mechanisms designed to prevent labor unrest among whites. The net effect was to create a white labor elite, protected by the state and hostile to concessions for black labor. The resulting pattern of racially separate labor relations was preserved thereafter, its durability assured by its political and economic usefulness to subsequent white governments.

Four Waves of Black Unionism

The First Wave (1918-27). The first significant black union—the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU)—was formed in 1918 by Clements Kadalie and immediately focused its attention on wages. The ICU's attempt that same year to affiliate with a white labor federation to present a united and nonracial labor front was rebuffed. The ICU, however, had early success in obtaining a wage increase for black dockworkers without a strike, and its membership grew rapidly across a range of industries. Despite the legislation of 1924 intended to render black unions impotent, membership in the ICU—spurred in part by improving economic conditions—reached a peak of about 100,000 in 1927.

The ICU, however, soon became a political organization that lacked a clearly defined industrial base and, under Kadalie's leadership, engaged in more rhetoric than action. Its dissolution thereafter was rapid. Organization and administration deteriorated, and widespread financial irregularities were revealed. Desperate to retain his leadership and maintain a viable organization, Kadalie in 1929 became increasingly militant and in early 1930 led the remnants of his faction of the ICU in a fruitless strike that resulted in his arrest. Black union activity during the depression of the 1930s effectively collapsed.

The Second Wave (1938-45). A small group of union organizers—including white members of the Communist Party—remained active, however, and, by the late 1930s, several surviving and newly formed black unions combined to create the Joint Committee of African Trade Unions (JCATU). This group in turn attracted additional black unions which in 1938 established another loose federation, the Trade Union Coordinating Committee (TUCC). By 1940, JCATU had 26,000 members. In 1942, the TUCC gave way to the more formal Council of Non-European Trade Unions whose goal was to work for legal recognition of black unions and workers.

Economic recovery spurred by the war effort encouraged black labor to organize as black workers again became aware of their economic importance. By 1941, the first effective African Mine Workers' Union had been formed, and it engaged in more than 60 illegal strikes over a two-year period. Despite harassment by management, by 1944 the union's membership had grown to 25,000.

The "second wave" reached its peak in 1945 when 119 black unions boasted 158,000 members, mostly near Johannesburg. A strike by 74,000 miners in 1946—led by a Colored member of the Communist Party—was violently suppressed, however, and resulted in many arrests and a severe setback to the movement.

Disappointment over the lack of tangible achievement caused growing disaffection and conflict among many black labor leaders. The Council of Non-European Trade Unions began to break up but a new, more activist body, the Council of African Trade Unions (CATU), was established. The heavy political orientation of CATU, however, led to new conflicts among its leaders and divisions among unions.

The Third Wave (1954-61). By 1950, total black union strength was down to 52 unions with about 35,000 members. With few exceptions, the black labor movement languished throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Attempts to mobilize black labor during this period—such as the founding of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in 1954 by nonracial leftists, and of the Federation of Free African Trade Unions (FFATUSA) in 1959 by black nationalists—had a distinctly political tone because of heavy infiltration of labor and other black organizations by the now outlawed Communist Party.

Both SACTU and FFATUSA were for the most part ineffectual as labor organizations even though SACTU claimed 100,000 members at its peak in the late 1950s. The arrest and banning of activist union leaders and the burden of repressive racial legislation contributed to the collapse of SACTU and FFATUSA in the early 1960s, although SACTU has continued to survive in exile. By 1969, black union membership had dropped to 16,000.

The Fourth Wave (1973-76). The relative labor peace of the 1960s—characterized primarily by prosperity, industrial peace, rising real wages for whites, and little or no black trade union activity—was broken abruptly in 1971 by a violent strike involving Ovambo contract workers in Namibia. It served as a catalyst for public debate over the treatment of black labor, with many white unions and members of the political opposition in Parliament joining employers in arguing that recognized black unions would provide a more effective means of controlling black labor.

A spontaneous outburst of strikes in early 1973 by black workers in Natal Province triggered a surge in black organizing efforts and attracted international attention. At least six new black unions were formed that year, and nearly twice that many more over the following two years.

Blacks engaged in a record number of strikes and work stoppages in 1974. The momentum toward further change had grown sufficiently to have raised black expectations, and black union membership reached about 59,000 by 1975. Simultaneously, however, deepening economic recession and growing black unemployment created a mix of economic and political pressures that almost certainly played a role in fueling South Africa's worst racial violence—the Soweto riots in June 1976.

Pretoria's response in the aftermath of the Soweto riots was to crack down on black organizations of all types, including labor unions. The banning in November 1976 of 26 individuals involved with black labor probably marked another low point for the labor movement. The setback was temporary, however, and was merely a pause before union activity resumed with greater vigor than ever.

Cautious Lessons From History

Whether union growth among blacks since 1979 is viewed as a "fifth wave" or merely an extension of the fourth, there is little question that the proliferation of black unions and explosive growth in membership are unprecedented in their intensity. Nonetheless, the factors that contributed to previous periods of growth and decline still obtain, and the prospect that the newly formed black unions will survive and become effective is by no means assured:

- The reasons that unions emerged and grew at the particular times they did seem to lie in the existence of two conditions: the presence of activist labor organizers, frequently but not exclusively whites, and the presence of economic conditions that strengthened black workers' perceptions of their power or importance.

- The role of economic conditions is more subtle and has shifted in response to changes in the structural conditions of the South African labor market over time. Black unions have prospered in the past under both good and bad economic conditions, and the growing importance of skilled black industrial labor to the South African economy has further insulated some black workers and their unions from the full effects of short-term economic fluctuations.

- Many factors have contributed to the periodic waning of black unions, some of them structural to South African society and, therefore, beyond the control of unions, including the hostility of employers, the government, and organized white labor, buttressed by police harassment.

- Other problems have been endemic to the unions themselves and often the result of too much union success. Few educated or trained black labor leaders have been available, and the pace of growth often has exceeded the ability of available black leadership to control members and to avoid destructive internal conflict, magnified by divided worker loyalties and persistent tribal and language differences.

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Appendix B

Government Harassment of Organized Black Labor, 1979-83

1979

March
During a strike by the AFCWU, 10 members and General Secretary Jan Theron are detained for questioning. Theron is charged under the Riotous Assemblies Act but acquitted later.

April
South African Security Police (SASP) question the chief organizer of BAWU, Dr. Denis Pewa, in Durban and other members of the union in East London. One of the union's national organizers, Thozamile Gqweta, claims the police tried to induce him to become a paid informant.

1980

The government refuses to renew the passports of two FOSATU officials.

February
Sam Kikine, General Secretary of SAAWU, is detained, questioned, and released by SASP after addressing workers in the Orange Free State.

March
Arsonists set fire to the home of SAAWU national organizer Thozamile Gqweta in Ciskei.

April
Ciskei police detain Gqweta under Riotous Assemblies Act in connection with a strike.

May
Two organizers of the former Western Province General Workers' Union (WPGWU), including General Secretary David Lewis who is white, are detained during a Cape Town strike.

June
Four more organizers of the WPGWU are detained. All six are released in August.

Three shop stewards from AFCWU are detained during a walkout.

August
Gqweta redetained.

Two officials of AFCWU, including Oscar Mpetha, are detained. Mpetha had been a founding member of SACTU.

October
Gqweta redetained. His mother and uncle are killed as fire guts their home in Ciskei. Gqweta's girlfriend is shot and killed at his mother's funeral. Gqweta's lawyer is killed later in an unsolved murder.

November
Seventeen union officials are detained in Ciskei. FCWU, AFCWU, WPGWU, and SAAWU are involved. All detainees are subsequently released.

1981

January-June
Ciskei authorities detain more than 60 workers involved in labor disputes.

June
President of MWASA detained by SASP under Terrorism Act.

July
Officials of GWU (formerly WPGWU) are detained for questioning by SASP following organizing of East London dockworkers.

Alan Fine, a white official of the Witwatersrand Liquor and Catering Trade Union, is detained under the Terrorism Act and charged with having connections to the ANC.

September
Ciskei police detain 205 members of three unions following a union meeting in East London.

November
Officials of GAWU and the Johannesburg Municipal Combined Employees' Union are detained.

In a major sweep, the SASP detains six prominent union officials: Emma Mashinini, General Secretary of CCAWUSA; Samson Ndou, Chairman of GAWU; Sam Kikine, General Secretary of SAAWU; Mary Ntseke, General Secretary of GAWU; Rita Ndzanga, organizing secretary of GAWU; and Neil Aggett, Transvaal Regional Secretary of AFCWU. Three other SAAWU officials are detained shortly thereafter, including President Thozamile Gqweta and Vice President Njikelana—each for the third time this year.

Five MACWUSA officials are detained under the Terrorism Act.

Details of a government plan to break SAAWU are disclosed to employers in the Eastern Cape.

1982

January
National Treasurer of SAAWU is detained.

February
SAAWU's Gqweta and Kikine, under detention since November 1981, are hospitalized for depression.

Neil Aggett of AFCWU dies in detention.

March
Mary Ntseke, General Secretary of GAWU, is detained along with two other union members.

Matthews Oliphant, General Secretary of the National Federation of Workers (NFW), is detained for 69 days.

Gqweta is released by SASP but is immediately picked up by Ciskei police, who demand that he report three times daily.

May
Gqweta is detained by the SASP and charged under the Terrorism Act. Charges are withdrawn later.

Philip Dlamini, General Secretary of the Black Municipal and Allied Workers' Union, is detained and subsequently charged under the Internal Security Act.

June
Four MACWUSA officials, including Chairman Dumile Makhanda, are detained under the Terrorism Act. They are released later and banned for two years.

Three AFCWU officials are detained in Ciskei.

Four MWASA members are detained by the SASP.

The SASP detains the Acting General Secretary of CCAWUSA.

July
A GWU official is detained in Ciskei.

September
Two MAWU officials are charged under the new Intimidation Act following a strike.

October
Seven MAWU shop stewards are charged under the Intimidation Act for their recruiting activities.

November
Local South African officials impose a ban on meetings in a town where NAWU was organizing workers after being granted recognition by a firm.

1983

March
Break-in at Cape Town offices of GWU; the third such incident in a year. SASP denies union allegations of its involvement.

Six SAAWU officials are detained in Ciskei, including Gqweta and Njikelana for the seventh and fifth times in three years.

April
The SASP prevents guest speakers, TV crews, and nonblack participants from attending MACWUSA's third annual congress.

May
Two AFCWU officials are detained by Ciskei police operating in South African territory.

June
Oscar Mpetha, an elderly AFCWU official and a founding member of SACTU, is convicted of terrorism for his alleged involvement in a violent incident in mid-1980.

Four MWASA officials are detained.

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Appendix C

Chronology: Significant Events for Black Labor Before Reform

1828
Contracts of longer than one year prohibited and influx control abolished for Colored but not black workers.

1841
The first of long series of Masters and Servants Ordinances passed, defining employment as a contract relationship in which the employee is obligated to work.

1861
Discovery of diamonds.

1870s
Compound system of housing for black contract labor established at diamond mines.

1881
First trade union established in South Africa—a branch of a British union.

1884
First trade union established in the diamond mines.

1886
Establishment of the gold mining industry.

1888
First locally based labor organization established—the Durban Typographical Society.

1890s
Compound housing system for blacks extended to the gold mines.

1892
First white union established in the gold mines.

1893
First legal job color bar enacted, precluding nonwhites from blasting jobs in the mines.

1897
First strike by white workers.

1907
First general strike in South Africa—by white miners protesting use of blacks in skilled jobs. Strike broken by hiring of unemployed Afrikaners, a breakthrough for the emerging Afrikaner working class.

1909
General strike by white workers.

Labor Party formed to articulate interests of white labor—the first party to promote a full segregationist policy.

1911
The Mines and Works Act grants government the right to certify competency in skilled trades, thereby excluding nonwhites and extending the color bar.

1911
The Native Labor Regulation Act controls recruitment and working conditions for black miners and declares strikes to be a criminal offense.

White unions form the Federation of Trades.

1913
Land is partitioned, giving whites 86 percent of all territory.

Government recognizes the Federation of Trades.

Chamber of Mines recognizes a white union.

Black mineworkers begin a series of strikes to protest the color bar rules that blocked their promotion.

1914
Native Labor Act extends compound system of housing to all black contract workers.

Competition between white and black miners results in the establishment of the South African Industrial Federation (SAIF) to protect white workers.

1915
The Chamber of Mines recognizes SAIF as the representative of white miners.

1918
Strike over wages by black miners is violently suppressed. The mineowners sign an agreement with whites not to use blacks as replacement labor.

1919
The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) formed by Clements Kadalie and calls an unsuccessful dock strike over wages. Kadalie receives national exposure.

SAIF rebuffs an ICU attempt to affiliate.

1920
Strike by 71,000 black miners. Whites support management and keep mines operating.

The first labor convention of black workers held, sponsored by the ICU. Kadalie is defeated in a bid for leadership of renamed Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICWU), but continues to head Cape Town ICU.

Sixty-six strikes mark a new wave of unrest by white workers, often prompted by unresolved status of blacks.

In a general election, disgruntled white workers give the Labor Party its strongest popular support so far.

1921
Onset of postwar depression causes mineowners to renounce 1918 agreement with SAIF not to replace whites with blacks.

1922
The Rand Rebellion takes place—insurrection by white miners protesting growing employment and advancement of blacks. Government uses military and police force to put down the rebellion. The mines withdraw their recognition of SAIF.

1923
The Supreme Court rules in favor of mineowners in declaring the color bar illegal.

The Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act restricts access of blacks to cities in white areas.

An ICU conference denies links to the Communist Party and rejects political involvement.

1924
A pact between the National Party and the Labor Party results in election victory and a coalition "Pact" government, replacing the regime that had crushed the Rand Rebellion. The new regime immediately enacts a so-called Civilized Labor Policy to protect unskilled white labor.

The Industrial Conciliation Act provides for the first time for the official recognition and registration of white trade unions and sets up industrial councils as a mechanism for settling disputes. Blacks are specifically excluded from the definition of an employee. Black unions not unlawful, but do not receive official recognition.

1925
Wage Board established to rule on wages for unorganized workers, including all blacks, but without allowing affected workers to represent themselves.

ICU moved to Johannesburg from Cape Town and begins rapid growth among unskilled blacks.

1926
An amendment to the Mines and Works Act legalizes the color bar, thereby excluding blacks once again from skilled work and the use of explosives in the mines.

1927
Natives Administration Act gives governmentwide powers to control meetings of blacks.

ICU membership reaches 100,000, but the union becomes increasingly political and lacks a clearly defined industrial base. After another unsuccessful attempt to affiliate with white unions, Kadalie urges moderate policies and political restraint and moves to oust Communists from ICU leadership. Disaffected leftists begin to quit the ICU and form new, industrially based black unions.

1928
Several leftist black unions form a trade union federation while other black unions in Cape Province form a separate federation.

1930s
Black union activity wanes, in part because of loss of white leadership following break between labor leaders and the Communist Party.

Several surviving and new black unions form the Joint Committee of African Trade Unions (JCATU).

1938
JCATU joins other black unions to form a loose federation, the Trade Union Coordinating Committee (TUCC).

1941
African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU) formed and is responsible for at least 60 illegal strikes over the next two years. The Chamber of Mines refuses to negotiate.

Increased agitation, including by some white unions, for recognition of black unions.

1942
Council of Non-European Trade Unions succeeds TUCC, with the aim of attaining legal recognition of black workers under industrial legislation.

1944
AMWU membership reaches 25,000. Government bans meetings of more than 20 persons.

1945
The Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act provides controls for blacks residing in urban areas by setting curfews and governing the issue of passes blacks are required to hold for residence, employment, and movement.

Wave of black labor organization reaches a peak with 119 unions and 158,000 members, about half of them in Johannesburg.

1946
Labor Party endorses a policy for non-Europeans that calls for the abolition of cheap labor, provision of adequate housing for black workers and their families, equal pay for equal work, and local government for non-European townships.

Strike by 74,000 black miners results in arrests that weaken the black labor movement. The Council for Non-European Trade Unions begins to break up, leading to the establishment of the Council of African Trade Unions (CATU). Heavy political orientation and conflicts among labor leaders cause divisions.

1947
Industrial Conciliation (Natives) Bill is proposed by government—intended to provide mediation and arbitration system for blacks, to prohibit black participation in mixed race unions, to require registration of black unions, and to allow a restricted right to strike.

1948
The National Party wins the general election and assumes power for the first time. It immediately withdraws the Industrial Conciliation Bill proposed by the previous government.

1949
CATU disbanded, but the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions is reorganized with 13 black unions out of 15 affiliates.

1950
Total black union strength falls to 52 unions with about 35,000 members.

Group Areas Act establishes racial segregation in ownership, residence, occupation, and trade.

Suppression of Communism Act is passed and used to remove white union officials active in black labor organizations.

1953
Bantu Labor (Settlement of Disputes) Act denies blacks the right to participate in registered unions and establishes stiff penalties for strikes, which are illegal.

1954
South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) formed as the labor wing of the Communist-led Congress Alliance in an effort to mobilize the black labor force as an instrument of political change.

South African Trade Union Council (SATUC) formed by white unions. Name changed later to Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) to avoid confusion with SACTU.

1956
Native Administration Amendment Act allows arrest and detention of blacks without trial.

Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act regulates virtually all aspects of labor relations. It forbids mixed unions and union participation in or funding of political activities, and restricts the right of whites to strike while continuing to prohibit it outright for blacks. Also empowers the government to establish—with employer consent—job reservation where necessary to protect whites in skilled jobs.

1957
South African Confederation of Labor (SACL) formed by conservative white unions.

1958
Last remaining Labor Party members of Parliament defeated in general election.

1959
Amendment to the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 gives government the unilateral authority to impose job reservation in any industry, without employer consent.

Progressive Party formed on an interracial basis.

1959
Federation of Free African Trade Unions of South Africa (FFATUSA) formed by black nationalists linked to the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), a black political liberation movement.

1960
The African National Congress (ANC)—the oldest black political liberation group—and the PAC banned. The still-legal SACTU becomes a front for the ANC and the South African Communist Party.

1964
Facing possible expulsion, South Africa withdraws from the International Labor Organization.

1968
Proclamations under the Group Areas Act of 1966 ban nonwhites from management and supervisory jobs in urban (white) areas.

Rule limiting contracts for black workers to one year is reintroduced.

1971
Strike by Ovambo contract workers in Namibia draws attention to the key economic role of black workers.

TUCSA encourages businesses to help establish and negotiate with black unions that would be affiliated with existing white unions.

1972
Increasingly open debate on merits of recognizing black unions.

TUCSA helps establish education and training facilities for black union officials.

The Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC), a black coordinating body, formed in Natal.

1973
Outbreak of a series of strikes by black workers in Natal—60,000 workers involved in 160 incidents at 146 establishments.

Government responds to unrest by passing the Bantu Labor Relations Regulation Amendment Act, changing significantly the preceding act of 1953. It grants blacks a severely restricted right to strike and allows them some direct participation in industry-level talks with employers, but continues to exclude recognition of black unions which government insists are unnecessary.

Emergence of several new black unions.

International labor movement begins to press for black union rights in South Africa under the threat of trade boycotts and business disinvestment campaigns.

1974
Prominent business leaders and employer organizations call for official recognition of black unions.

A subsidiary of a British firm signs the first recognition agreement with an unregistered black union.

1975
"Fanie" Botha appointed Minister of Labor. Announces plan to establish black industrial committees with power to bargain on behalf of black workers.

All Masters and Servants Acts are repealed to avoid threatened boycott by US longshoremen of South African coal shipments.

Associated Chambers of Commerce and the Federated Chamber of Industries call for integrated unions and the development of black unions.

TUCSA votes to reopen membership to blacks.

1976
Soweto riots in June.

Pretoria serves banning orders in November on 26 labor activists.

1977
US businesses operating in South Africa endorse the Sullivan Principles, which provide a code of fair labor practices but do not call for trade union rights for blacks.

The European Community approves a code of conduct for European firms operating in South Africa calling for recognition of black trade unions.

South African Consultative Committee on Labor Affairs (SACCOLA) establishes a code of conduct for domestic employers.

Government appoints the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions of Enquiry into labor affairs.

Union of Black Journalists becomes the first union ever banned in South Africa.

A British firm refuses to renew its historic first recognition agreement with an unregistered black union.

1978
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) begins a yearlong campaign in support of union rights for South African blacks.

Strikes in Europe mark the first instances of overseas union members taking solidarity action against a multinational company because of its labor practices in South Africa.

Riekert Commission submits its report.

Evans Amendment in the United States prohibits export credit assistance to US firms not certified as having fair employment practices in their South African operations.

FOSATU founded by black unions and begins formal operations in 1979.

1979
Wiehahn Commission issues interim report—the first of a six-part final report.

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